

REFASHIONING SOUTH-SOUTH SPACES:
CLOTH, CLOTHING and KENYAN CULTURES of ECONOMIES

Tina Mangieri

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
Department of Geography.

Chapel Hill
2007

Approved by:

John Pickles

Altha Cravey

Banu Gökariksel

Julius Nyang'oro

Margaret Wiener

© 2007
Tina Mangieri
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ABSTRACT

TINA MANGIERI: Refashioning South-South Spaces: Cloth, Clothing and Kenyan
Cultures of Economies
(Under the direction of John Pickles)

Globalization narratives, though ubiquitous, are increasingly confounded by Africa. As presented by a hegemonic “West,” globalization has rendered Africa precipitously “behind” Asia and Latin America, with respect to its ‘global’ importance. Clothing - specifically garment production for export - has been embraced varying in Kenya and elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa as an antidote to this increasing marginalization. The emergence of outward processing strategies for global apparel production throughout much of Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s has provided only limited success and remains but a tenuous thread by which non-oil producing African economies are seemingly linked to global trade. Export-oriented apparel production is, however, only one of four “international clothing systems” at work in Kenya. While moving beyond the confines of export processing, this study identifies cloth and clothing as sites of transforming regional integration, reconfiguring development strategies, and as sources of multiple imaginaries of globalization. Beginning with an interrogation of “African” clothing, secondhand garments, and export apparel production, historically situated, I argue that their intersections are mutually constitutive, persistently colonial, and indicative of a level of global integration elided from normative global accounts. Attentive to the intersecting scales through which clothing is experienced - from the corporeal to state-

based policies to international networks of trade - I continue with a tandem focus on clothed bodies and the creation of consumer subjectivities to explore the ways in which these international clothing systems come together in everyday life and how, in this process, the cultural and economic are intertwined. I conclude with an ethnographic approach to international trade, via a focus on Kenyans and “Dubai clothes.” Within a framework of transnationalism, I explore the reimagined linkages between East Africa and Arabia through emergent networks of small-scale garment entrepreneurs. This re-orientation evidenced by Kenyans seeking economic and cultural integrations with Asia offers an alternative to Western-scripted narratives of globalization. As trade data likewise suggests, despite the rhetorical and material investments in exports to the West, Kenya’s most important trading relationships are those with other African countries and with Asia. This shift signals a departure from present-colonial understandings of Africa vis-à-vis the West to increasingly compelling South-South spatialities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe a considerable debt of gratitude to the many individuals who have supported this project from conception through completion. At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, I thank my indefatigable dissertation advisor John Pickles, and committee members Banu Gökariksel, Altha Cravey, Margaret Wiener, and Julius Nyang'oro for their guidance, comments, and appreciated support. “Honorary committee members” who provided much (and much-needed) inspiration include Wendy Wolford, Eunice Sahle, and Scott Kirsch. Tom Whitmore has been of enormous assistance since my arrival at UNC and made quick work of the many procedural questions I have had over the years. Barbara Taylor and Nell Phillips of the Geography Department and Holly McPherson and Linda Comer at CURS provided appreciated support and prompt responses to my many queries. While at the University of Kentucky, I was fortunate to have guidance and inspiration from Sue Roberts, Rich Schein, Anna Secor, and John Paul Jones III. To all of these individuals, and those I may have inadvertently forgotten, I extend my sincere appreciation.

I thank my fellow UNC geography graduate students: Joseph Palis, David Havlick, Matt Reilly, Angela Cacciaru, Tamara Johnson, Chris Erlien, Murat Es, Christian Sellar, Dennis Arnold, Jon Lepofsky, Carlos Mena, and Jonnell Allen for good humor, critical commentary, and, when needed, fabulous guest lectures. Extra special thanks go to Carlos Mena for creating the accompanying maps, and Dennis Arnold and

Annelies Goger for trade data tutorials. I am grateful to Benjamin Smith for the research assistance he provided from Dubai and Ana Araujo, Marcia England, and Vanessa Hudson for support, motivation, inspiration, and welcome distractions. I would also like to thank Jennifer Bair and Gary Gereffi for inviting me to present my work, in its embryonic stages, at both Yale and Duke Universities, respectively.

This research was generously supported through various organizations and awards. I sincerely thank the U.S. Department of State and the Institute of International Education (Fulbright), the National Science Foundation (DDRI Grant BCS-0503687), The Philanthropic Educational Organization (P.E.O. Presidential Fellowship), and the Department of Geography, the Graduate School, and the University Center for International Studies at UNC Chapel Hill. A FLAS fellowship from the University of Iowa in 2003 first brought me back to East Africa as a Ph.D. student – I thank Kathleen O'Reilly for suggesting their support. In preparing these and other applications, I am most grateful to John Pickles, Banu Gökariksel, Altha Cravey, Leo Zonn, John Paul Jones III, Julius Nyang'oro, Ann Biersteker, and Sue Roberts for what must have been very kind letters of recommendation.

In Kenya, I am deeply indebted to Kadara Harith Swaleh, Athman Lali Omar, Salma Hussein Abubakar, Jamal Awadh Omar, and their families and friends, for patiently guiding me since 2002, providing innumerable stimulating conversations, a wonderful historic home in Kibokoni, and crave-inducing cuisine. I am grateful to Dr. Ann Biersteker, whose Yale Summer Swahili Program in Mombasa helped launch this research in 2004, and to the School for International Training, and particularly Mary Lou Forward, for offering me a position in Mombasa in 2001 to assuage my sadness upon

leaving Dakar. I thank the Government of Kenya for research clearance, the helpful staff of the Kenya National Archives in Nairobi, and the many workers, traders, and shoppers who gave generously and graciously of their time in Kenya, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman. Any inaccuracies or misrepresentations are, of course, my own.

To say I could not have completed this dissertation without the support, understanding, and partnership of Ephraim McDowell is an understatement. I owe him my deepest gratitude. For reminding me that there is more to life than this, I dedicate this dissertation to Giacomo and to his sisters and brothers in Dubai, Oman, and especially, Kenya. In bringing such spontaneity and joy to everyday life, they make this troubling world an infinitely better place.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	xi
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	xiv
Chapter	
I. PRODUCTION PLACES, CONSUMPTION CASES, and SARTORIAL SPACES.....	1
Research Questions and Objectives.....	7
Theoretical Approaches.....	11
Methodologies.....	23
Chapters.....	31
II. THE POLITICAL ECONOMIES of TEXTILES and APPAREL in KENYA, pt. 1: <i>African Print Cloth</i>	36
Historical Geographies of Cloth and Clothing in Kenya.....	41
Fashioning Regional Economies.....	47
Kenyan Textiles and Apparel, 1943-1963.....	49
African Print Cloth, Rise and Decline.....	57
<i>Mali ya Abdulla</i>	68
Postscript.....	74
III. THE POLITICAL ECONOMIES of TEXTILES and APPAREL in KENYA, pt. 2: <i>Export Processing</i>	80

	The Kenyan Postcolony.....	85
	Textiles and Clothing after Independence.....	87
	Kenyan Clothing Production: “Inward” to “Outward” Processing.....	90
	EPZs in Kenya.....	95
	AGOA in Kenya.....	98
	AGOA, Apparel and Kenyan Development.....	104
	Who Controls Industry in Kenya?.....	111
IV.	THE POLITICAL ECONOMIES of TEXTILES and APPAREL in KENYA, pt. 3: <i>Mitumba</i>	115
	Global and Local Secondhand.....	120
	<i>Mitumba</i> Geographies.....	125
	<i>Mitumba</i> and Everyday Life in Kenya.....	128
	Mzee Nguku.....	136
	Textiles and Apparel: Articulations and Outcomes.....	139
V.	CLOTHED BODIES, CLOTHING SYSTEMS and SWAHILI CONSUMPTION.....	146
	Situating Dress as Practice, Materiality, Commodity.....	151
	Swahili Men’s Fashions.....	159
	Swahili Men: Fashioning Faith, Identities and Apparel Systems.....	174
VI.	RE-FASHIONING TRANSNATIONAL SPACES.....	182
	Transnational Narratives.....	182
	Dubai in Kenya.....	187
	(Business) Travel and Transnationalism.....	194
	Kenyans in Dubai.....	198

Ibn Battuta Mall and South-South Materialities.....	207
Islam, Identity and Transnational Trade.....	215
Kenyans in Dubai, Revisited.....	223
VII. RE-ORIENTING AFRICA.....	226
Looking East.....	229
Globalization, Re-oriented.....	231
Representations of Africa, Revisited.....	234
Contributions.....	237
Methodological Notes.....	241
APPENDICES.....	247
REFERENCES.....	249

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1.	Kenya's direct imports of <i>khanga</i> , 1955-1959.....	64
2.	Kenya EPZ apparel factories and employment, 2000-2006.....	102
3.	Kenya EPZ garment factories, location and ownership.....	112
4.	Comparison of Kenyan and Tanzanian <i>mitumba</i> imports.....	123
5.	<i>Mitumba</i> exports (HS 6309) to Kenya from EU 27, 1995-2005.....	128
6.	<i>Mitumba</i> categories imported into Kenya.....	130
7.	HS 6309 (mitumba) exports from U.A.E. to Kenya, 2000-2004.....	170

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure

1. South-South perspectives: Africa and Asia.....	4
2. <i>Leso</i> , California Estate, Nairobi.....	6
3. <i>Mitumba</i> jeans seller, Gikomba, Nairobi.....	7
4. Field sites: Kenya, United Arab Emirates, Oman.....	24
5. Mural, Mombasa apparel boutique.....	32
6. <i>Jalabiya</i> and <i>buibui</i> (<i>abaya</i>) for sale in Deira, Dubai.....	34
7. Kenya, with provincial boundaries.....	37
8. Indian made Swahili <i>leso</i> , souq al Moutrah, Muscat, Oman.....	57
9. Mali ya Abdulla, Biashara Street, Mombasa.....	69
10. Apparel firms established in Kenya, 1922-1986.....	88
11. Weekly EPZ advertisement, Daily Nation, Kenya.....	96
12. Sewing buttonholes for AGOA exports, EPZ, Ruaraka, Nairobi.....	98
13. Kenya exports to US under AGOA, by value.....	99
14. Kenya apparel exports to US and EU 27, 2001-2006.....	100
15. Wal-Mart women's "slacks," Ruaraka, EPZ, Nairobi.....	103
16. Kenya apparel exports to US, 1990-2006.....	105
17. HS 6309 exporters to Kenya, 2004.....	126
18. <i>Mitumba</i> exports to Kenya from EU 27, 1995-2005, by quantity.....	127
19. <i>Mitumba</i> exports to Kenya from EU 27, 1995-2005, by value.....	127
20. Gikomba market, Nairobi.....	130
21. Gikomba market seamstress.....	132

22. Passersby outside Sunbeam <i>mitumba</i> market, Nairobi.....	135
23. Comparison of <i>mitumba</i> imports and EPZ garment exports, 2001-2005....	141
24. <i>Mitumba</i> t-shirt, Gikomba.....	144
25. <i>Kofia</i> , souq al Moutrah, Muscat.....	164
26. Swahili men in <i>kanzu</i> and <i>kofia</i> , Mombasa.....	167
27. Kikoy “dot” com.....	172
28. Dubai Exhibition and Dubai Cash & Carry, Nairobi.....	183
29. Leso-wearing Kenyan shopper, Deira, Dubai.....	202
30. Ibn Battuta Mall, Dubai.....	209
31. China Court, Ibn Battuta Mall, Dubai.....	211
32. Persia Court Starbucks, Ibn Battuta Mall, Dubai.....	212
33. Ibn Battuta “Jones”.....	219
34. Kenya Airways: The Fastest Way to All your Shopping Destinations.....	221
35. Dragon Mart, International City, Dubai.....	228
36. Africa-Asia, re-centered.....	241

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
EAC	East African Community
EPZ	Export Processing Zone
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
KNTC	Kenya National Trading Corporation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MFA	Multifiber Arrangement
WTO	World Trade Organization

Chapter 1:

Production places, consumption cases, and sartorial spaces

Globalization is a ubiquitous term in recent academic and popular literatures – so much so, this statement is strikingly banal in its obviousness. Animating discussions of culture, commerce, manufacturing, investment, style, ecology, climatology, conflict, and war, globalization links this hardly exhaustive list by a pervasive imaginary of smooth spaces of seamless linkages conjoining once disparate places and peoples. In best sellers, globalization is framed to suggest a world increasingly “flattened” (Friedman 2005) by a convergence of rapidly innovating technological know-how, access and affordability eliminating (or seeking to eliminate) the turgid boundaries of nation-state and the once static rivalries they represent.

Less sympathetically, globalization has been popularly characterized by a mass of “discontents” (Sassen 1999, Stiglitz 2003) suffering in the grip of an ‘invisible hand’ responding to ‘imperfect’ markets. These divergent perspectives, whether celebratory or cautionary, each have much to say about the United States, the European Union, and Japan, and, increasingly, China and India. As Ferguson has starkly delineated, even these most global (and bestselling) of narratives have shockingly little to say about Africa: a continent of 800 million individuals, occupying 20% of earth’s landmass (2005). When Africa is included in discussions of globalization, the continent and its people are

presented as exemplars of bad governance, basketcases, increasingly inconsequential peripheries, or, in the case of those few states that are perceived as having embraced structural adjustment and neoliberal imperatives (i.e., Uganda), as “success stories,” in part, for their dutifulness (Sachs 1996).

The problem with these approaches is not so much one of inaccuracies or inappropriate biases (that Africa is rife with problems can hardly be contested) but rather that this presentation is truncated by a tendency to “stop short” in linking African engagements globally, thus addressing the ways in which Africa and Africans are networked transnationally rather than stagnating in exceptional isolation. Furthermore, these approaches take as their origin and standard “the West,” from whence Africa is increasingly marginalized. How “global,” therefore, is a globalization discourse predicated on an absence of over 14% of the world’s population¹? Is it possible to speak of globalization without Africa?

This dissertation seeks to address the relative absence of Africa in these and various approaches to globalization. As such, this research serves, in part, as a corrective – a way of addressing the very problematics of avoiding what Ferguson calls the “inconvenient continent” (2005). While rejecting an “add Africa and stir” approach, I have instead focused on several theoretical and substantive areas of focus within the broader rubric “globalization” - economic development, global value chains, and consumption and the creation of consumer subjectivities. In each example, I consider the ramifications of Africa’s ‘absence’ through an engagement with various theoretical, methodological, and empirical outcomes of this truncated approach. I am particularly

¹ www.data360.org/dataset.aspx?Data_Set_Id=1606

concerned with how Africa is often elided from these accounts, and in turn, how its inclusion alters subsequent interpretations.

While African marginality is a common trope in globalization narratives and development discourses, I aim to resituate Africa from periphery to center. Doing so illuminates transformations in global spatial imaginaries – a turn from North-South to South-South (Fig. 1) – and the concomitant material, social, cultural, and economic effects of such a shift both substantively and theoretically. This is not an “alternative globalization” per se, though by destabilizing discursive norms this approach does challenge meta-narratives of globalization privileging Western standpoints. Rather, by focusing on the South-South relationships characterizing Kenya with respect to various sites in Asia, this research highlights globalization-as-popularized as a provincial approach whose moniker belies its limited geographical scope. I urge, instead, a situated, historicized, and contextualized transnationalism, as better reflecting local, regional, and fragmented spatialities of even the most wide-ranging ‘global’ ecumene.

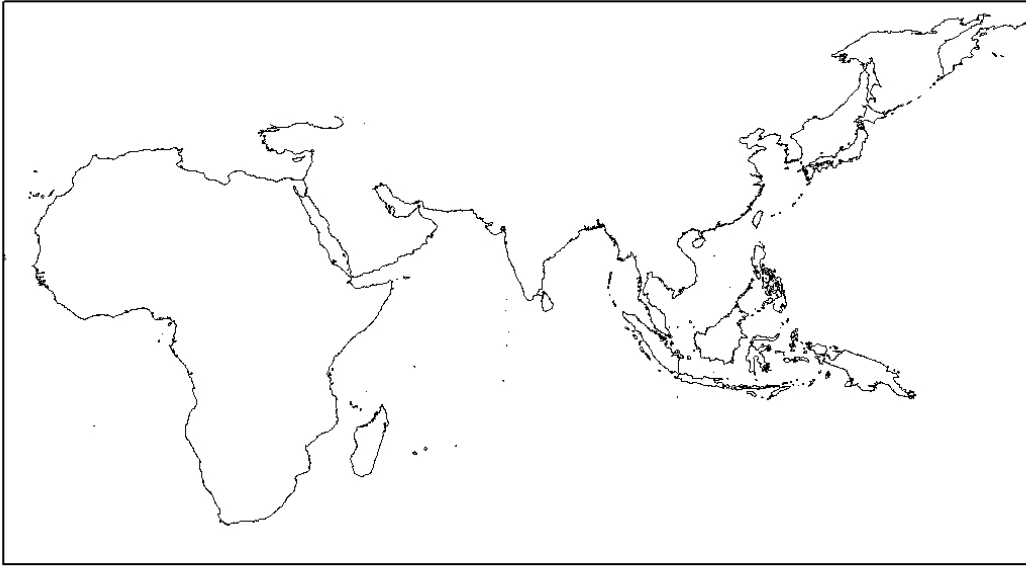


Fig. 1. South-South perspectives: Africa and Asia

This study identifies cloth and clothing as sites of transforming power struggles, reconfiguring development strategies, and as sources of multiple imaginaries of globalization. In this research, textiles and apparel serve as the common denominator of these ‘global’ narratives of manufacturing, trade, and consumption. Textiles and clothing were fundamental drivers in Africa’s post-colonial economic development. Import substitution policies enabled countries to develop a manufacturing sector of cloth and clothing production for local consumption, and proved attractive for quota seeking foreign manufacturers in the 1980s (especially Taiwanese producers). Trade liberalization rules are now transforming the conditions under which these industries were built. Foreign contracting and direct investment decisions are increasingly shaped by the exigencies of export-oriented apparel production. Quota removal and tariff reduction have increased competitive pressures and the difficulties facing African producers. But

contract production for international markets is only one part of the wider tapestry of apparel in Africa.

While the (varyingly positive and negative) economic impact of textile and apparel manufacture within sub-Saharan Africa is profound, cloth and clothing are far more than utilitarian commodities powering economic strategies (Fig. 2). Textiles and clothing are political, in Africa as elsewhere, in their manufacturing but also in their trade, consumption, and appearance. Continent-wide, African aesthetics imbue local fashions – from cloth motifs, to the particular draping of textiles on gendered bodies, from the adoption of secondhand clothing, to vernacular approaches to religiously or culturally proscribed attire. Trade networks within which cloth and clothing circulate link Kenya with former colonial powers in Europe, with large markets of consumers in North America supplying both innumerable secondhand castoffs and buyers for Kenyan-made clothing, regionally with other East African populations who share similar tastes in fashion, and, increasingly, with Asia, as a source of raw materials, ready-made apparel, foreign investment, and cultural influence.



Fig. 2. *Leso*, California Estate, Nairobi (February 2006).

This research emerged from a love of African fashion², though it has, appropriately, moved far from a purely aesthetic appreciation of weave, motif, and the rakishness deployed in putting together just the right look. In intellectualizing my admiration of African styles, I began to consider the cultural politics of textiles and apparel, varying understandings of gender, class, and ethnicity vis-à-vis the clothing worn, the economic importance of local manufacture, and the apparent devastation wrought by secondhand fashions. With the collapse of local production for the domestic market, the increasing absence of discernibly vernacular styles (in East Africa), and the emergence of export apparel manufacture, I wondered what effects, if any, these changes would bring to East African fashions. As my research indicates, the resonances of textiles and apparel are felt far outside this relatively narrow realm.

Multiple systems of clothing are now readily apparent in Kenya. Of these, secondhand clothing (*mitumba*) has emerged as a vibrant, if problematic, sector of both the economy and the aesthetics of East Africa (Fig. 3). New apparel for export, and, increasingly, new apparel imported into Kenya, share a number of sartorial sensibilities but indicate deeply divergent economic and relational patterns, particularly as Kenya links to “the West” and, by contrast, “Asia.” “African” fashions have likewise been

² This appreciation began when I lived in Tanzania in the late 1980s. As I suspected at the time and as was later confirmed when I moved to Senegal in 2001, vernacular East African textiles and clothing were limited in comparison to the widespread and vibrant local fashion scene in West Africa. West African clothing and textiles have likewise received the majority of scholarly attention. East African styles nevertheless retained a particular appeal for me, in part due to this “second class” status and to the comparatively few studies of domestic and imported apparel in the region.

reinterpreted, as some local Muslim styles (especially *leso* or *khanga* in Fig. 2 above) have decreased in popularity while regional garments, particularly *buibui* accompanied by a face veil, have surged in visibility. While particular garments and their cultural and political economies are critical to this study, other related issues emerged in the process of fieldwork, expanding its original focus. In particular, regional relationships within which Kenya is situated, particularly vis-à-vis the Middle East and with respect to the substantial Somali refugee population in Nairobi and Mombasa, play a larger than anticipated role in the clothing systems noted above and garnered my research attention in conducting this study. I return to this discussion in Chapter 5, below.

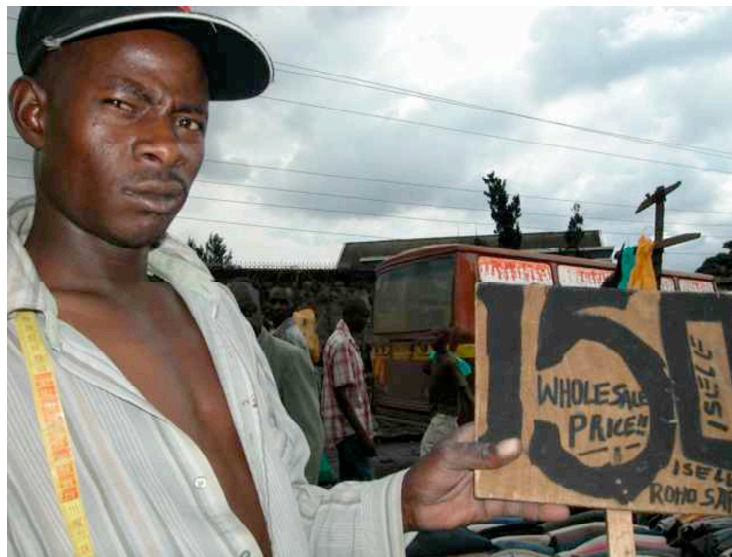


Fig. 3. *Mitumba* jeans seller, Gikomba, Nairobi (March 2006).

Research Questions and Objectives

Historical Geographies of Cloth and Clothing in Kenya

My first research objective sought to answer the following question: what are the historical geographies of clothing production and consumption in Kenya? This research ties into historical analyses of clothing and colonialism previously conducted in Southern Africa (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997, Hansen 1994, 1999, 2000) with important differences. While studies of clothing and colonialism in sub-Saharan Africa have taken Christian missionizing as their focus, detailing the moral imperatives of missionaries and the social control exerted over African bodies by the imposition of Victorian standards of European dress, in Kenya this process is complicated by the historical presence of Muslim communities and city-states along the coast. These early Swahili settlements, established as early as A.D. 675 on what is now the Kenyan coast (Horton 1996), are further distinguished by even older links to peoples in Arabia and Asia. These contacts yielded the development of indigenous styles of dress, corresponding to Swahili Islam, which continue to inform the coastal styles of today. This historical analysis thus concerned geographies of clothing production and consumption marked by distinctions between Christian and Muslim areas of Kenya under British systems of colonial manufacture. What role was played by Oman, which together with the British ruled the ten-mile wide coastal strip of Kenya from 1920 until independence in 1963? Did this fractured geography underscore later manufacturing and trade developments in united Kenya? How were clothing imports structured and what cloth items entered the country? What was the involvement of South Asian manufacturers in the nascent domestic cloth and clothing manufacturing sectors? What styles dominated and was the availability of these items consumer-driven, producer-driven, or otherwise complicated by existing

colonial structures? What integration of cloth and clothing production and trade, if any, existed between the Swahili coast and the interior (Kenya colony under the British)?

What do colonial documents and the oral histories of extant textile companies operating during this period reveal about these processes?

Contemporary International Clothing Systems in Kenya

My second research question asked how production, distribution, and consumption of cloth and clothing are organized by and for the Kenyan market? The objective here was to analyze networks of production, trade, and consumption of the three international clothing systems in post-independence Kenya with respect to the importance of cloth and clothing in recent economic development initiatives. Linked to each of these transformations are *leso*, brightly colored cotton cloth worn by women of coastal East Africa. Until recently, *leso* or *khanga* formed an integral part of the domestic cloth industry in Kenya. Domestic *khanga* production for local consumption and regional trade ceased by 2001 reportedly due to a combination of factors (also affecting the domestic garment industry at large) including the availability of secondhand clothing (*mitumba*) as preferred apparel. Recent preferential trade arrangements with the United States (AGOA – African Growth and Opportunity Act) and the European Union (Cotonou Convention) have resulted in tremendous growth in emergent export apparel production. Export processing zones (EPZs) were established from the mid-1990s in Kenya, primarily in Mombasa and Nairobi. Of the fifty-four firms operating in the EPZs, over thirty are textile and apparel manufacturers. My questions therefore concern the development of new geographies of production, trade, and consumption linked to these

three systems. How have these changes affected the physical, economic, and labor landscapes of Mombasa and Nairobi?

Networks, Identities, and Geographies of Globalization

My third objective was to understand how identity, based on gender, class, and religion, is woven together with global commodity chains of textiles and apparel to generate alternative geographies of globalization. My question was, thus, how do conceptions of identity (based on gender, class, and religion) articulate with global commodity chains of textiles and apparel to generate alternative geographies of globalization? In the course of the fieldwork for this project, however, I increasingly turned away from global commodity/value chain approaches. From a starting point offered by GVC analyses, I turned to highlight the experiences and subjectivities as expressed by the project's respondents, particularly as they articulated their global (and globalizing) engagements and the ways in which these moments were made meaningful in their everyday lives. Thus GVC analyses offered a particular (economistic and instrumental) global spatiality within which Africa is situated, but one that for related reasons was inadequate. As the focus of this project shifted from firm-level engagements to an interest in the interplay of identities and apparel with respect to corporealities and the participation of various communities in the establishment of trading systems historically and today, a strategic turn toward an incorporation of personal narratives within the broader rubric "global apparel trade" was warranted.

Global textile and apparel quotas were eliminated on January 1, 2005 for apparel manufacturers. In the aftermath, the best strategy forward for countries including Kenya may be to strengthen regional and South-South networks with other East African and

Asian states. These links have been and continue to be established on the basis of shared dependencies evidenced in each of the three international clothing systems in Kenya. Yet these economic relationships are informed by the cultural links that remain a vibrant part of the shared experiences linking Kenyans with others in the Indian Ocean region, and beyond. In this discussion, textiles and clothing provide the conceptual and material bases for spatial and temporal networks that work to differentially conjoin Africa with Asia and thereby expand notions of globalization that treat the former, particularly, as an aberration. The new forms of global subjectivities expressed in the interviews conducted for this project suggest that the Kenyan government, despite its “Look East” policy (discussed in Chapter 7), is in fact a step behind Kenyans themselves, whose active engagements across East Africa and into Asia, often via Arabia, are generating a dynamic, interactive landscape.

Theoretical Approaches

Although key empirical concerns relating to Kenya and to research on clothing, specifically, form the underlying bases for this research, they will be discussed in this section only insofar as they relate to the four literatures on which I draw to frame this project. I begin with a discussion of economic geography and, particularly, “new” economic geographies, to locate commodity chain/global value chain literatures, in part, and to present ways in which new economic geography approaches are useful in opening these discussions. I then turn to globalization as a ubiquitous and problematic referent and the ways in which the term is being deployed in current research. My third theoretical focus is on development. Here I present a brief synopsis of the literatures I engage and

their intersection with the problems this research addresses. Woven through each of these concerns is an interest in, and commitment to, postcolonial theory. I conclude this section with a discussion of both the contentious uses of the term (and its applications) and the fruitful engagements I nevertheless believe are possible using this approach as a guide.

New Economic Geographies

Geographers, especially economic geographers, have recently begun to focus on the interplay between cultural and economic analyses. Described, in part, as the “cultural turn” in economic geography, this focus is also denoted by the term “new economic geographies” (Amin and Thrift 2000; Barnes 2001; Crang 1997; Gibson-Graham 1996; Peet 1997; Schoenberger 1997; Thrift and Olds 1997). A prominent area of research within this site is, increasingly, consumption (Bell and Valentine 1997; Castells 1977; Crang and Jackson 2001; Featherstone 1991; Jackson 1993; Jackson 2004). This move toward interrogating consumption and consumers reflects a concomitant trend toward the rejection of a (Marxist) productivist vision of modernity, in favor of a more common recognition that people in their everyday actions and experiences as consumers have an increasingly formative role to play in maintaining social life.

As an analytic, consumption is viewed by its proponents as implicated in and productive of meanings of the way we view and represent the social world, think about ourselves, and communicate with others. Moreover, a focus on consumption provides possible sites to interrogate the development of capitalist consumption processes through commodities and the creation of new spaces for consumption, while providing sites to study intersections of gender and class, for example. I temper this optimistic rendering of possibilities by acknowledging the temptation to “black box” consumption. Consumption

cannot itself be naturalized nor de-linked from the contexts in which it emerges and is practiced and, as such, provides a particularly productive analytic for conjoining attention to cultures and economies.

Parallel to these recent developments in new economic geographies, a principal methodological contribution to the study of commodities in general, and textiles in particular, is the Global Commodity Chain (GCC) analysis pioneered by Gereffi and Korzeniewicz (1994) and later expanded (Gereffi and Kaplinsky 2001) and later refined under the rubric Global Value Chains, or GVCs (Gereffi et al. 2005)³. The GCC/GVC approaches interrogate economic relations between “developed” and “developing” nations (or North and South) through studies of the changing organization of production, distribution, and consumption of globalized commodities. In GCC analyses, the relationship between the two regions is broadly characterized by an interaction in which agents at the “end” of commodity chains in the global North create complex international networks to take advantage of lower labor costs in production, as well transferring other costs and risks to the South, while concurrently promoting supply flexibility, improving product differentiation and quality, and maintaining brand reputation (Gibbon 2000).

A GCC approach distinguishes between two distinct types of international networks: producer-driven and buyer-driven commodity chains. The former are characterized as “chains” whereby large, usually multinational, manufacturers occupy the central role in coordinating production networks (including their backward and forward

³ Global Value Chains differ from GCCs in their association with one of five “governance patterns:” markets, modular value chains, relational value chains, captive value chains and hierarchy. The patterns represent a continuum, with the “two traditional forms of economic governance” at either end (markets and hierarchies) together with a series of three types of networked governance (Gereffi et al. 2005). GVCs further aim to capture the changes in integration, from the vertical bifurcated system of GCC analyses to the more network oriented complexities identified in more recent transnational firms (ibid.).

linkages along the “chain”) (Gereffi 1999). Buyer-driven chains, by contrast, include industries in which the pivotal production decision-making and specification of goods is driven by large retailers, marketers, and branded producers who source their products through secondary and tertiary manufacturers but who themselves do not operate primary production facilities. The chain format allows for the inclusion of a variety of differences (geographical locations, labor skills, technologies, etc.) at each “link.” Indeed, recent versions of GCC analysis suggest the possibility of a dynamic role offered by buyer-driven commodity chains for reconfiguring the seemingly static hierarchy of North-based decisions and South-based responses.

As proposed by Gereffi (1999), buyer-driven commodity chains have liberatory potential for the South by allowing for dynamic “upgrading” whereby the Southern “end” of the chain may itself assume a “driving” role in relation to the elaboration and coordination of regional production networks within the South. Gereffi, and others, see the apparel industry in particular (of which textiles, *per se*, would be one component part) as ideal examples for analyzing the dynamics of buyer-driven commodity chains. Geographers working with this approach have expanded its boundaries by integrating the dramatic growth of the garment industry (in Eastern Europe) in relation to both new geographies of global neo-liberalism and trade liberalization as well as the social and cultural embeddedness of industrial economies (Pickles and Smith 1998; Smith, Pickles and Begg 2003) and by otherwise spatializing GCCs (Leslie and Reimer 1999).

The possibilities for multiply unfolding material and discursive constructions of transnational networks of textiles and apparel call for an approach based in new economic geographies. This approach is also attentive to important pitfalls. Recognizing

their inspiration in and debt to feminist and poststructuralist approaches, practitioners of new economic geographies suggest the need to carefully consider the at times facile use of normative terminologies. Of the contentious terms and logics characterizing this research project, few are as problematic as globalization.

Globalization(s)

While Dicken (2004) laments the lack of geographers engaging substantively and trenchantly with globalization debates, interrogations of “globalization” *have* fueled considerable recent research in geography and in the social sciences more broadly (Amin 1997; Amin 2002; Appadurai 1996; Harvey 1989; Hirst and Thompson 1999; Mitchell 1997; Nagar *et al.* 2002; *and* Dicken 2003). A particular spatial focus addresses how processes of globalization have been reshaping the geography of the global economy (Massey 1991; Markusen 1996; Storper 1997). Castells (1996) is credited with invigorating the attention to networks in the social sciences. While Actor-Network theorists, inspired by Latour (1987, 1993), advocate a focus on actor-networks as critical in interrogating the manner by which Europeans came to “know” and “control” the world (Murdoch 1997). Geographical research has deepened our understandings of globalization as bound up in the construction of scale, place, space and networks (Dicken *et al.* 2001; Sheppard 2002; Swyngedouw 1997). This research illuminates how changing geographies of economic processes associated with globalization are shaping, and are in turn shaped by, the spatialities of the global economy.

For Castells, globalization is a “network society” constituted across space as a multiplicity of linkages, connections, and relations – a “space of flows” – representing the new spatial logic of the information age. In this view, the world is increasingly

covered by “the meta-network of financial flows” (1996:472), a top-down technological triumph in information flows engendering a global economy with the capacity to work as a unit in real time on a planetary scale. Networks, for Castells, are conceptualized as globally networked capitalism. Here, my reliance on Kenyan actors, elaborated below, allows for both conceptual and empirical resistances to this reductionist logic. I agree with Ong’s critique of Castells when she writes, “politics, culture, and human agency are viewed [by Castells] only as the effects of globalizing processes, such as trade, production, and communications, rather than as vital logics that play a role in shaping the distribution, directionality, and effects of global phenomena” (1999:241). In keeping with Ong, in this project I aim to bring the relationships animated by cultural practices, human agency, and [identity] politics to bear on “globally networked capitalism” in the form of the global trade in textiles and clothing.

Development

Research in Africa involves certain imperatives, including attention to issues of “development.” While poststructural and other theoretical trajectories have recently captured the attention of social science practitioners in the academies of the U.S., in particular, a concern for policy-relevant study attentive to very real issues of poverty and inequalities remains, arguably, more central to those engaged in African-based scholarship. While I believe there to be some leeway for combined efforts, a discussion I will return to below in the context of postcolonial theory, I am sensitive to this concern (and critique) and take issues (and critiques) of development as a guiding approach to this research.

As is true, above, for globalization, few can agree on the meaning of development, its “projects,” and how best to achieve them (or if this is even possible). Indeed, the very term has received much-needed deconstruction (Sachs *et al.* 1992, Escobar 1995). While the terminology may change, the ideas underlying “development,” particularly those surrounding “progress,” remain entrenched in the lexicon of modernity. Development theory has itself shifted from modernization theories of the mid-twentieth century (Lewis 1954, Myint 1954, Rostow 1960) to political-economy dependency theories (Baran 1957, Frank 1966, Amin 1976, Prebisch 1981) and later crises as development practitioners and proponents absorbed the triumph of neoliberalism associated with the fall of the Soviet Union and the subsequent “transitions” of Eastern Europe. During these periods the focus itself shifted from large-scale projects aimed at providing such infrastructure as electricity, often and most egregiously in the form of misguided dam constructions, to a rhetoric of “putting people first” exemplifying what became known as the “development decade” of the 1970s and early 1980s. This period was also marked by the incorporation of gender and “the grassroots” into development design. With the 1980s, 1990s, and the rise of the Washington Consensus, a focus shifted to structural adjustment - as both development strategy from the perspective of a “new developmentalism” (Manzo 1999) and a source of deeply disturbing approaches in the view of its many critics. The 1990s also gave rise to theories of anti-development through discursive deconstructions of development’s terminology highlighting the violence inherent in labeling the majority of the world “underdeveloped” (Sachs *et al.* 1992, Escobar 1995).

Whither development? To some, the power of anti-development critiques have ushered in a period of “post-development” beyond which development itself lacks purchase as a theoretical or practical project (cf. Rahnema and Bawtree, eds. 1997). Others advocate reconceptualizing development less as a linear achievement (in a Rostowian sense) than as a complicated process that at different moments reflects increased or decreased levels of global interconnectedness (Ferguson 1999, 2001).

In his ethnography of the abject aftermath of the copper industry boom in Zambia, Ferguson suggests a refusal to part with the framework of development, despite the anti-development critiques with which he sympathizes. According to Ferguson, [i]f nothing else, “development” put the problem of global inequality on the table and named it as a problem; with the development story now declared “out of date,” global inequality increasingly comes to appear not as a problem at all but simply as a naturalized fact (2001:146).

While I share Ferguson’s desire to continue to name and thus keep the myriad problems conjured by development as a focus of attention, I believe a further distinction needs to be made. While “development” succeeded in labeling disparity as a problem, the term also deeply contributed to the naturalization of economic and social inequities, to the failure of projects based in this ideology, and to the formation of new concepts rendering growing inequality “not as a problem at all.” For Ferguson the main question now, in an era of “post-development,” is “what comes next? (2001:144). This research takes up this question by pursuing both an historical contextualization of the role of textiles and apparel as a postindependence development strategy in Kenya and the transformations in the international systems of these commodities in the context of contemporary development frameworks.

Postcolonial Theory

The theoretical concerns of this project coalesce in the context of postcolonialism. Again, this is a term that is not without its problems. Indeed, as Sidaway discusses in the context of postcolonial geographies, the term postcolonial is used in two distinct yet increasingly convoluted ways: as a temporal designation “after colonialism” and “to signify aesthetic, political and theoretical perspectives (which have mostly been elaborated in literary and cultural theory)” (2000:594). In this latter sense, postcolonialism as an approach is committed to critique, expose, deconstruct, counter and, in some instances, transcend the broader ideological legacies and presences of imperialism. I prefer postindependence to characterize the former meaning, while agreeing, in part, with the latter usage.

Postcolonialism’s impact within geography has been somewhat limited, and confined primarily to historical geography and cultural politics. The path-breaking critiques of Said (1978, 1993), Spivak (1985), Bhabha (1993) and others have challenged geographers interested in colonial histories (Blunt 1994, Gregory 1994, Jacobs 1996) and inspired those broadly concerned with the persistence of the “colonial present” (Ashcroft *et al.* 1989, Sidaway 2000, Blunt and McEwan 2002, Gregory 2004). In the context of this project, I incorporate postcolonial theory in a variety of ways. Given my interest in historicizing textiles and apparel, I share a commitment to the usefulness of postcolonial approaches to historical geographies and to recognizing continuing exploitations and dominations in the present. I am likewise interested in combining postcolonial and economic geographies, a pursuit beginning to generate interest, including sessions organized for the 2005 Association of American Geographers (AAG) meetings on

“Postcolonial Theory and Economic Geography” and the creation of a seminar series in Newcastle, Durham, and Manchester (U.K.) from 2006-2007 on “Postcolonial Economies.”

This project and its potential are thus multi-fold. Underlying the various and episodic moments of this research, is a concern with transformations in the relationships linking Africa with Asia. In interrogating these connections, I utilize the material and conceptual “constants” of textiles and apparel. While I began with the aim to read commodity chains of textiles and apparel through the variable lenses of gendered, classed, and religious identities to “critique, expose, deconstruct, counter and in some instances transcend” the lack of attentiveness to the specific cultural and political dimensions of these networks, my focus has refracted from this original GCC referent. The functionalism and strived-for universalism of GCCs was quickly at odds with my field experiences, where a plethora of strategies and engagements were on view, decentered from global positions of power but nevertheless actively creating and recreating transnational connections “beneath” Western-oriented globalization topographies. Using the interviews conducted as a narrative framework, I have instead focused upon producers, traders, and consumers detailing the links they perceive and work actively to maintain and expand in their textile and garment businesses. Likewise, I take up an interest in postcolonial geography more broadly to speak to issues of provincializing geographic knowledges, engaging with renewed regional scholarship, and otherwise transforming the conditions of the production and circulation of knowledges (Robinson 2003).

Chakrabarty (2000) has observed that in relation to historical knowledge “Europe works as a silent referent” in which historians of the Global South are compelled to refer to works in European history while Northern historians feel no such need to reciprocate (28). This critique may be similarly leveled at geography and geographers. As such, a postcolonial critique in this context may yield both a provincializing of geographical knowledges, thereby undermining the implicit claims to the privileging of information garnered from Western contexts, while at the same time creating conditions for a critical transnational scholarship.

One way in which I pursue this opening is through a reconceptualization of the region. By focusing on South-South connections between East Africa, South Asia, and Arabia, and within East Africa, I aim to recast “areas” or “regions” to include, in this case, the Indian Ocean littoral. While carrying limited purchase in the North, an Indian Ocean imaginary linking Africa and Asia (though now more likely to involve air travel than seafaring) resonates with East African communities, as my interviews for this project suggest. These spaces are likewise home to the networks of production and trade in textiles/apparel that are my focus. As Robinson, presciently (for this research) indicates, “[c]oncern with an ‘Indian Ocean’ diaspora might renovate ‘African studies,’ for example, and reorientate scholars there to exploring links with India and the East” (2000:279)⁴.

Finally, research that gives its attention to South-South networks and a reconceptualized region of Africa-Asia linkages, offers the potential to generate perspectives that undermine normative Western understandings of globalization and a

⁴ A number of current research projects attest to a new and vigorous interest in both Indian Ocean region studies and in an increasingly productive interest in Africa-Asia connections (Sylvanus 2007, Walker 2002, 2007).

perpetuation of abortive development strategies. Kenya and Kenyans, as this research indicates, have increasingly greater options in terms of their alliances. With China and India emergent, and countries of the Near East, elsewhere in Asia, and Latin America offering increasing, if not unproblematic, alternatives for collaboration, investment, political-economic alliances, and cultural connections and exchange, this study explores such available strategies from the perspectives offered by postcolonial theories.

With respect to the geographical and discursive spatiality of South-South, a discussion is warranted. While the term “Global South” has begun to displace previous phrases including “Third World” and “Less or Under-developed world” and is often used alongside “Developing World,” its referent is increasingly obscure (Dirlik 1994, Radcliffe 1999, Lester 2003). Where once these terms referred arguably unambiguously to large swathes of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, particularly, (at the height of the development-era of the mid to late twentieth century), this is no longer the case. Both countries that were previously lumped within this rubric, including the pre-petroleum United Arab Emirates of which Dubai is a part, and enclaves within spaces that might otherwise conjure “Third World” (in, for instance, South Africa) no longer fit the “image” associated with being “undeveloped” nor the economic measures used as indicators. As more of the world increasingly “meets” the expectations of being “developed,” the meanings and associations constituting the Global South have similarly shifted. As the Dubai Ports World controversy in 2006 suggests (Smith 2007), Dubai’s identity as a Muslim entity continues to shape its relationships to the West, in particular. Though widely lauded for its comparative progressiveness in the Gulf region (which is itself intimately linked with the economic strategies, particularly tourism, on which its

current wealth is increasingly based), its Muslim identity is viewed in “the West” as potentially disadvantageous, and in the U.S. as downright threatening. Thus new “criteria,” including in this case religious or specifically Islamic affiliation, have come to augment the economic associations of the previous terms. In this project, therefore, I understand Dubai as a nodal point, and an important one for Kenya, in the global South.

Methodologies

I conducted fieldwork for this research in Kenya, Dubai, and Oman from February 2006 to September 2006 (Fig. 4). Given the questions prompting this research, I utilized both archival sources and interviews, supplemented by trade data, newspaper articles, marketing materials (for shopping malls and airlines), and other media (including television and radio). In a reorientation from the original proposal for this research, I eliminated complementary fieldwork in Tanzania and India (which was to have included study of *leso* manufacturers in both locations) This change was made for personal and professional reasons. When I arrived in Kenya to begin this research in February 2006, the state of the *leso* trade was (and continues to be) in steep decline. By contrast, a thriving and substantial market was evident in the importation of new clothes from Asia, particularly the United Arab Emirates (and additional locations including Thailand, Hong Kong, and the People’s Republic of China), popularly referred to as “Dubai clothes.” I thus opted to map these linkages by traveling to the United Arab Emirates (specifically Dubai) and Oman following completion of the Kenya portion of the research. In the United Arab Emirates my focus shifted to Kenyans (and to a lesser degree, Tanzanians) in Dubai involved in the trade in new apparel for sale in East Africa. In Oman I continued

the original emphasis of the research with a focus on *leso* to interrogate the persistence of cultural and specifically textile links between coastal East Africa and Asia and its ramifications.

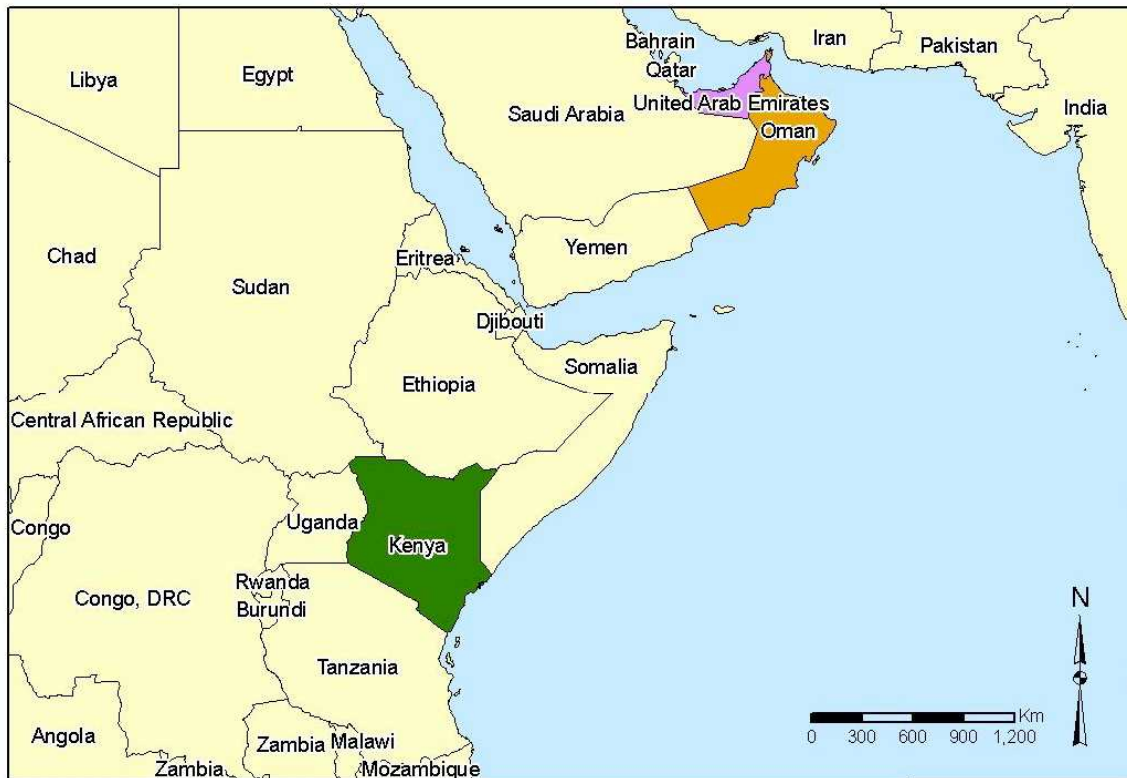


Fig. 4. Field sites: Kenya, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman.

I conducted participatory ethnographic research in Swahili communities in Mombasa and Nairobi (with families and individuals who themselves are originally from coastal Kenya or who identify with past generations from locations on the coast) with a focus on everyday consumption practices with respect to local fashions and secondhand clothing (*mitumba*). My reasons for this focus are as follows. The rise in *mitumba* since 1991 has been anecdotally related to a concomitant decline in *leso*, while the adoption of export processing facilities has similarly emerged in the same timeframe (post-1991).

(Re-) adoption of *buibui* and, increasingly, the face veil or *ninja*, as the preferred fashion among urban Swahili women has been observed by the investigator and others over the past 10-15 years (Fuglesang 1992). Men, too, have exhibited changes in their clothing preferences, as evidenced by a renewed interest in and availability of “traditional” Muslim fashions (Hansen 2004). The complexity of these linkages required attention to production, trade, and consumption in both contemporary terms and historically. These issues of identity and regional linkages expressed via apparel trading, form the basis of Chapter 5, below. In addition, I interviewed garment traders, including Swahili individuals, in Dubai and Oman to explore the role of this community and Islam more broadly in the regional apparel and textile trade.

Archival Data

I utilized the National Archives of Kenya for historical information (pre-1976) on the emergence of textile and clothing manufacturing in East Africa, statistics regarding various mills in operation, sources of investment, investor relationships with the colonial and later post-colonial states, and the items produced and sold. For contemporary trade data, I consulted various Government of Kenya publications, UNIDO documents available online detailing “Industry and Development” analyses, generally, and specific documents relating to the textile and apparel industries including publications on “Textile Policy Issues for Developing Countries” (published periodically). United Nations publications including “Demographic Yearbooks” and “International Trade Statistics Yearbooks” provided baseline information regarding global manufacturing and trade. World Bank and IMF reports, increasingly available online, offered trade statistics and descriptive (and prescriptive) documents detailing the country-specific industrial sectors in Kenya

and various “agendas for reform and recovery.” Kenya’s government publisher provided a source for numerous documents available locally detailing economic surveys, local industries, national investment promotion policies, and strategies for reinvigorating local manufacture. Public documents available via several Internet resources proved helpful, including the EPZA (Export Processing Zones Authority) (www.epzakenya.com) and AGOA (African Growth and Opportunity Act) websites, in addition to updated trade profiles available via UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), OTEXA, and Comext. In Kenya I was also able to obtain a number of locally available documents, including the Kenya Human Rights Commission’s report on EPZ factory conditions for garment workers, and directories produced by the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) and the Kenya Apparel Manufacturers and Exporters Association (KAMEA).

Private archives, particularly the collections of Mali ya Abdulla, founded in 1887 (the oldest extant family-owned *leso* manufacturers, importers, and sellers in East Africa, located in Mombasa), included documents pertaining to the history of the local cloth trade, and samples and images of past and present designs. This archive likewise included the prodigious historical memory of the oldest living brother very actively engaged in the family business, Mr. Abdul Hamid Kaderina, who participated in this research as a key informant.

Interviews, focus groups, and participant observation

A total of 65 semi-structured interviews were conducted during eight months of fieldwork. I began by identifying key informants in the following areas related to textiles and garments: government, manufacturing, and the wholesale and retail textile and

apparel trade (both new and used). All formal interviewees in Kenya, Dubai, and Oman were provided with Institutional Review Board (IRB) documents detailing the research, its objectives, and the proposed dissemination of its results. In obtaining permission, I offered interviewees the option of recording our discussions on mini-disk or, if they preferred, writing up the conversation in lieu of a recording. Many opted for the latter format. I maintained anonymity for all interviewees, though several were comfortable providing their names and affiliations “for the record.” Participating “key informants” in Kenya represent the following organizations (named here with their permission, followed by the number of interviewees per establishment):

Ministry of Trade and Industry – 2
Kenya Association of Manufacturers – 2
Export Processing Zones Authority – 2
Kenya Human Rights Commission – 1
Muslim World League, Kenya – 1
Mali ya Abdulla (*leso* firm) – 1
Upan Wasana (EPZ manufacturer) – 2

Additionally, representatives and/or employees of the following formal and informal groups participated as interview subjects in Kenya: *mitumba* traders (Gikomba, Sunbeam, and Ngara markets – Nairobi and Kongowea and Mwembe Tayari markets – Mombasa), *mitumba* wholesalers (Nairobi and Mombasa), EPZ garment factory managers (Nairobi and Mombasa), “exhibition” managers and stall renters/employees (Nairobi and Mombasa), clothing boutique owners/employees (Nairobi and Mombasa), and shipping company representatives (Nairobi and Mombasa). Consumers of various ages, genders, ethnic affiliations, and class identities were interviewed either individually or in groups, though all “key informants” were also questioned as to their own textile and

apparel purchases and predilections. In total, 47 semi-structured interviews were conducted in Kenya.

In Dubai and Oman, a total of 18 semi-structured interviews were conducted, 12 and 6, respectively, in addition to numerous informal conversations. Research sites included Naif Souq, Meena and Murshid Bazaars, and various shopping malls in Dubai and *souq al Moutrah* and Lulu Hypermarket in Muscat. Interviews were recorded either during (in a notebook), or following (on laptop computer), each encounter. I similarly augmented the formal Kenyan interviews with informal discussions and note-taking.

Both Mombasa and Nairobi have the largest (in area and number of sellers) and highest volume secondhand clothing markets and I selected several locations in each city as sites of research on the organization and sale of *mitumba*. As my “clothing system” focus is coupled with an emphasis on the intersection of everyday life in Swahili communities in Kenya within these networks of textiles and apparel, both Mombasa and Nairobi provided integral field sites. Swahili are concentrated historically on the coast and increasingly in Nairobi, thus these cities were necessary sites from which to conduct research on Swahili identity and clothing.

In Mombasa, I utilized established research links in Old Town and Sparki, two areas of predominant Swahili settlement. In Nairobi, my efforts were concentrated in and around Eastleigh Estate, including the areas of California, Majengo (both surrounding Gikomba *mitumba* market) and residential areas adjacent to Ngara *mitumba* market. In these neighborhoods, using snowball sampling and survey techniques⁵, I located

⁵ By “survey techniques” I am here referring to visual surveys of the areas that provided a host of information. As shown in Fig. 1, when I happened upon a row of *leso* drying outside California Estate, in Nairobi, I was immediately aware of the probable Swahili and/or coastal population in residence. While many groups in Kenya do wear *leso*, my interviewees repeatedly suggested that today only Swahili

communities of Swahili residents. Interviews and focus groups with these individuals provided an opportunity to investigate everyday conceptualizations of networks and links in the organization and maintenance of these parallel and intersecting systems of apparel. While I established contacts and set up interviews with these key individuals, I began participant observation in the markets

In the shops, *souqs*, and *mitumba* markets, I relied on participant observation in addition to interviews. Participant observation enables interaction with participants and provides opportunities to note discrepancies between things said and things done (Burawoy 1991; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Dewalt and Dewalt 2002). To understand the consumer practices of *mitumba* and other apparel shoppers, in addition to those who reject these styles, I also conducted two focus groups, one each in Nairobi and in Mombasa. Data collected from focus groups provide information that might otherwise be unknown (Krueger 1994; Wilkinson 1998). In the context of East Africa, focus groups provide a culturally-appropriate⁶ format for group discussion. The interaction among group interview participants proved a valuable resource for studying issues of gender and class and likewise offered a more empowering situation for research subjects than other methods (Montell 1999).

Community informants for research on consumer practices vis-à-vis *mitumba*, *leso*, and *buibui* were selected in several ways. I began by identifying shoppers in the

maintain their *leso* as pairs (other ethnic groups, by contrast, may purchase half a *leso* and in some cases may own only a single piece of cloth). Here the clothesline was remarkable for the care taken to hang both pieces of *leso* together to dry. When I stopped to find out who owned the textiles, I was introduced to a world of Swahili women and their families originally from the Kenyan coast and now resident in Nairobi.

⁶ In keeping with the common practices of everyday life in East Africa, and with the feminist theoretical and methodological approaches I subscribe to in conducting this and other research, few interviews conducted for this project were solitary endeavors. When speaking with the majority of my interviewees, multiple people were often present at any given time, including my research assistant but also family and friends of the interviewees. Women, and sometimes men, were often accompanied by their children during their interviews. Interruptions were not uncommon.

markets and boutiques amenable to interviews and focus group participation. I additionally relied on the networks and relationships I have formed over several years of residence in Kenya in seeking participants for discussion. These initial interactions led to further and expanded inclusions in the research – or “snowball” sampling (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). While snowball sampling introduces issues of sample bias in research, this method was nevertheless useful, effective, and in the case of studying the relatively small community of East African entrepreneurs in Dubai, necessary in obtaining research participants.

In this study, I am not seeking a grand (meta-) narrative to sum up and thereby subjugate the complexities of global apparel and the spaces of Kenya within these frameworks. Rather, I aim for a series of episodic interventions on the themes of globalization, development, transnationalism, and Africa through a focus on multiple “sites” associated with textiles and clothing. Feminist and poststructural geographers have provided critical insights into the value of what Katz terms “minor theory” (1995) with an overt nod to Deleuze and Guattari’s writings on “minor literature” (1986). As such, Katz urges Gregory (and all geographers) in her largely favorable review of his “major” theoretical contribution to geography in *Geographical Imaginations* (1994), to “acknowledge and embrace other, often “minor” ways of knowing and working” (1995:167). As Cravey notes in her work on the social spaces of Latino immigrants in North Carolina “I believe further elaboration [on globalization and transnationality] is possible through gleaning insights from the most ordinary activities of transnational migrants” (2005:359). This focus on the politics of daily life serve to “engage and extend

feminist understandings of globalization” (ibid., see also Freeman 2001, Nagar et al. 2002).

I rely here on interventions or “contexts” (Morris 1998) associated with each of the four international systems of this study and, particularly, their intersections, to signal alternative renderings of global spaces and cultural economies woven throughout. Contexts, in this way, offer both a method and an object of research (Morris 1998). Morris is inspired by Grossberg, for whom “contexts comprise ‘a specific bit of everyday life’ positioned *between* culture, understood as a ‘specific body of practices,’ and particular social forces, institutions, and relations of power.” (Morris 1998:7). This research is similarly guided by a concern for how contexts are “made, unmade, and remade, and how they change the meaning and value of cultural practices.” (ibid.).

Chapters

In Chapters 2, 3 and 4, I focus on the parallel and intersecting development of three international clothing systems in Kenya, respectively: ‘African’ print cloth with its own transnational histories of design, production, and trade; export-oriented mass-produced clothing for consumption in large Western markets (primarily the U.S.); and the importation and sale of secondhand clothing sourced from these same markets. By focusing on these systems, and by stressing their interrelatedness, I seek to expand discussions of production in clothing and textile research beyond an emphasis on “assembly for export,” by integrating analyses of export production with both production for domestic consumption and the “production” of local markets for secondhand clothing. In first pursuing an historical approach to cloth and clothing trades during the British

colonial period, I aim to contextualize the post-independence development strategies pursued by Kenya, wherein textiles and apparel have played a significant role (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Mural, Mombasa apparel boutique (June 2006).

In Chapter 5, I detail consumer practices surrounding Muslim/vernacular fashions, secondhand clothing, and the recent availability of new apparel or “Dubai clothes” within and in relation to Kenya’s Swahili community. In the process, I address the context of recent trends in Muslim fashion among the Swahili – from the cessation of local manufacture of vernacular Swahili styles, to trade liberalization, transformations in popular culture, consumption landscapes, and concurrent changes in perceptions of the wider region in which the East African coast is physically, culturally, spiritually, and economically situated. By focusing attention on individual bodily practices (and their

foundation in particular socio-economic communities), I aim to rescale the macroprocesses of the previous chapters and their emphases on historical and contemporary global, regional and state apparel policies. In “scaling down,” I am interested in the mutually constitutive ways in which taste, fashion, and culturally meaningful patterns of Swahili consumption intersect “global” apparel systems.

Chapter 6 situates a focus on textiles and clothing in Kenya as necessarily transnational. In this chapter, I turn to Dubai in order to extend previous discussions of international clothing and textile systems operating within Kenya to include the increasing cultural (and economic) presence of “Dubai clothes.” I explore the particular ramifications of “Dubai” in the context of consumption and apparel economies in Kenya, and, in turn, the presence of Kenya and Kenyans in Dubai. Here I offer a discussion of Ibn Battuta Mall in Dubai, in an effort to materialize via consumption the places and practices animating textile and clothing networks within the global South. I detail a nascent phenomenon in East Africa – small-scale apparel traders traveling to Dubai and, increasingly, elsewhere in Asia, to purchase clothing for subsequent sale at small stalls and shops at home (Fig. 6). While I emphasize that my focus is primarily on Kenya, I argue that Kenya’s textiles and clothing experiences (as commerce, fashion, identity, development strategy, etc.) are best understood in the wider context afforded by a transnational, and particularly a South-South, perspective.



Fig. 6. *Jalabiya* and *buibui* (*abaya*) for sale in Deira, Dubai (August 2006).

I conclude in Chapter 7 with a discussion of recent changes in Africa-Asia linkages. In particular, I am attentive to the ways in which textile and clothing issues animate these expanding and contracting networks – from emergent spaces of Sino-Africa links in Dubai to consumer quality debates favorably comparing secondhand clothes with new Asian imports. While this chapter develops the idea of South-South networks through further engagement with transnationalism and attention to the development promises and pitfalls of these engagements at the state level, it also offers Kenyan perspectives on the lived experiences of Africa-Asia relationships. From multiple apparel subjectivities (consumer, trader, producer) and within regional and global spatialities, Kenyan intersections with Asia, particularly, suggest an alternative ‘globalization’ narrative to the usual trope of marginalization offered by Western perspectives on global integration. Emergent relationships between Africa and Asia, while fraught with inequitable power dynamics and fears (on the part of some Kenyans)

of a newly exploitative neo-colonial relationship with the region, are nevertheless providing the bases for renewed assessments of Africa's place in (and place-making of) the world.

Chapter 2:

The political economies of textiles and apparel in Kenya, pt. 1: *African print cloth*

Cloth and clothing production, trade, and consumption are currently undergoing dramatic upheavals in Kenya (Fig. 7). Domestic production of ‘traditional’ African¹ print textiles for local consumption, once a focal point of post-independence manufacturing strategies ended in the late 1990s. Significant changes in the global regulatory environment affecting Kenya, including preferential trade arrangements with the European Union (the Cotonou Convention of 2000) and the United States (the African Growth and Opportunity Act or AGOA, passed by the US Congress in 2000), resulted, initially, in tremendous growth in nascent export apparel production prior to the end of the Multifiber Arrangement (MFA) on January 1, 2005. Gains experienced by the sector in the early post-AGOA environment included a tripling of Kenyan textile exports from USD \$45 million in 2001 to USD \$150 million in 2003 (Flint, 2004). Since the end of the MFA, however, the industry has been plagued by factory closures and job losses. Small and medium garment enterprises, of which there are 4000-6000² in Nairobi alone (McCormick et al. 2002), are struggling to maintain market share in the current

¹ While I refer to this cloth, characterized by boldly-patterned designs printed in multiple colors on cotton as both “African” and “traditional,” the terms belie the regional differentiations and complex global genealogies of these textiles. I therefore utilize quotes to signal their transnational conceptual, production, and trading histories (see Sylvanus 2007).

² McCormick et al. identify 6000 small scale firms selling garments in Nairobi, of which 4000 are producers selling directly to consumers (and wholesalers), while the remaining 2000 are traders (2002).

liberalized environment (Kinyanjui and McCormick 2003). The increasing importation of secondhand clothing, banned in Kenya until the 1990s, has likewise profoundly affected production, trade, and apparel consumption.



Fig. 7. Kenya, with provincial boundaries.

Current export apparel manufacture in Kenya relies on comparatively “cheap” Asian cloth imports and other manufacturing inputs, and on a similarly “cheap” import system of secondhand clothing for the consumption of industry workers and most Kenyans. The secondhand system is blamed, in part, for the cessation of local print cloth production and the current challenges facing small producers. Export apparel manufacturers source their inputs from Hong Kong, China, Pakistan, and India³,

³ Information on these sourcing countries, listed in no particular order, is based on interviews with extant apparel manufacturers in 2006 and information obtained for firms in production through 2002 (KAMEA 2003).

primarily. Extant textile ties to India, in particular, are based on long-standing relationships between families and associates of the same regional and ethnic identities as their counterparts in Kenya. In addition to the three interrelated systems above, a fourth and more recent practice – the importation of new garments into Kenya for domestic consumption, popularly known as “exhibition” or “Dubai clothes” – has emerged since 2000, together with related changes in clothing consumption landscapes (see Chapter 5). In this trade, small entrepreneurs from Kenya (and Tanzania) travel to the United Arab Emirates, Thailand, Hong Kong, and the People’s Republic of China to purchase apparel subsequently sold in shops and ‘exhibitions’ in Nairobi and Mombasa. Taken together, these practices exhibit an effusive non-linearity in the textiles and apparel trade in Kenya, elided by global value chain approaches to garments. As a focus on Kenya suggests, the changing geographies of the garment trade are part and parcel of a series of transformations affecting Africa-Asia relationships. These shifts, I argue, offer a ‘Southern’ corrective to Northern-oriented analyses of globalization.

In Chapters 2, 3 and 4, I focus on the parallel and intersecting development of three international clothing systems in Kenya, respectively: ‘African’ print cloth with its own transnational histories of design, production, and trade; export-oriented mass-produced clothing for consumption in large Western markets (primarily the U.S.); and the importation and sale of secondhand clothing sourced from these same markets. By focusing on these systems, and by stressing their interrelatedness, I seek to expand discussions of production in clothing and textile research beyond an emphasis on “assembly for export,” by integrating analyses of export production with both production for domestic consumption and the “production” of local markets for secondhand clothing.

In first pursuing an historical approach to cloth and clothing trades during the British colonial period, I aim to contextualize the post-independence development strategies pursued by Kenya, wherein textiles and apparel have played a significant role.

To this end, I begin with a discussion of the historical geographies of cloth and clothing in Kenya. Following a brief introduction of the transnational textile and apparel trade in East Africa through the 19th century and a summary of the economic strategies enacted in Kenya Colony, I assess British colonial documents regarding apparel in Kenya through 1963. I subsequently focus on an historical assessment of vernacular East African fashions, specifically *khanga*. Archival documents chart a volatile history in the *khanga* trade, as colonial officials downplayed local consumers while bolstering business for both British-owned firms in Kenya and textile producers at “home” in Great Britain. Archival documentation of the secondhand clothing (*mitumba*) trade prior to independence, by contrast, is limited to two inquiries in the late colonial period. I take up this issue and further questions of *mitumba* in Chapter 4. I conclude with a personal recollection of the *khanga* trade by its most storied practitioner, Abdulkader Kaderdina, of the oldest extant *leso* firm in East Africa - Mali ya Abdulla - in Mombasa. In this narrative, patterns evident prior to decolonization, including the perceived persistence of colonial dictates and the fluctuating importance of Asian trade in vernacular fashions founded on longstanding ethnic networks, reappear among the characteristics of the contemporary apparel trade forty years later. Chapter 3 continues this analysis with a focus on textiles and apparel beginning with Kenya’s independence in 1963.

As developed throughout this research, the discussion below is guided by two understandings for interrogating globalization and, particularly, expanded considerations

of “the” global generated by resituating Africa at the center of analyses: networks and related issues of embeddedness. Spatial conceptualizations of contemporary economies and societies have tended toward discourses of circuits and flows, emphasizing (hyper)mobilities and arguing that ‘fixities’ no longer matter (Castells 1996, Urry 2000). While greater mobility is, arguably, characteristic of particular patterns of contemporary globalization, an historical view of the Indian Ocean renders current obsessions with flows passé. Networks – of production, trade, and consumption – have long characterized the western Indian Ocean of which the Kenyan coast, Kenya Colony, and the current Republic of Kenya have been well-enmeshed. Rather than a borderless world (see Yeung 1998, Dicken et al. 2001), Kenyan involvements in textiles and apparel have instead highlighted variegated spaces of connectivity and power, in which various actors, often by virtue of particular ethnic and cultural affiliations, contribute to the creation and recreation of production and trade networks spanning Africa and Asia.

The material presented in chapters 2, 3, and 4, relies on a mixed archive, including interviews with key informants in the following sectors: government, export manufacturing, international and domestic shipping, new and secondhand garment importing, and representatives of wholesale and retail apparel establishments. In addition, I utilize archival documents (through 1976) housed in the Kenyan National Archives in Nairobi, newspaper articles, technical reports, government publications, consumer interviews and participant observation in the markets of Nairobi, Mombasa, Muscat, and Dubai. Several websites have also been consulted in this research, including OTEXA, the U.S. Office of Textiles and Apparel (<http://otexa.ita.doc.gov>); COMEXT, the EUROSTAT database for Intra- and Extra- European Trade (fd.comext.eurostat.cec).

eu.int/xtweb/), and data available through the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (www.unctad.org). Laws of Kenya (www.lawsofkenya.com), the Export Processing Zones Authority Kenya (www.epzakenya.com) and the African Growth and Opportunity Act website (www.agoa.gov) were also consulted, where appropriate.

Historical Geographies of Cloth and Clothing in Kenya

In an effort to contextualize present patterns within the apparel trade, my first objective posed the following questions: what are the historical geographies of clothing production and consumption in Kenya? This research builds on historical analyses of clothing previously conducted in Southern Africa (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997, Hansen 1994, 1999, 2000), though these studies focus on the role of Christianity in the early adoption of western-style clothing. In Kenya, processes of colonial clothing encounters are complicated by the historical presence of Muslim communities and city-states along the coast.

These first Swahili settlements, established as early as A.D. 675 on what is now the Kenyan coast⁴ (Horton 1996), are further distinguished by even older linkages to

⁴ European colonial history in East Africa begins with the arrival of the Portuguese on the Kenyan coast in 1498. By the end of the 16th century, Portugal controlled the majority of the Swahili city-states from present day Somalia to Mozambique, including Mombasa. In 1729 the Portuguese were, however, permanently expelled from Mombasa and were replaced as the leading power on the coast by two Arab dynasties: the Busaidi dynasty (first based in Muscat, Oman and, from 1832, in Zanzibar when the then ruler, Seyyid Said, made Zanzibar the capital city of Oman), and the Mazrui dynasty, based in Mombasa. The Busaidi dynasty took control of Mombasa from the Mazrui in 1837. In 1861 a split between two Busaid brothers resulted in the separation of Zanzibar from Oman and Muscat, with subsequent rulers of the former designated "Sultan of Zanzibar." In 1887, a British association received concessionary rights to a 10 mile wide strip the length of the Kenyan coast from the Sultan of Zanzibar. In 1888 this association was given a royal charter as the British East Africa Company. Due to financial difficulties on the part of the company, the British government took over its holdings in 1895, establishing the East African Protectorate. In the same year, construction began on a railway linking Mombasa with Kisumu on Lake Victoria (completed in 1901).

peoples in Arabia and Asia. Mombasa and other port towns of East Africa were in direct and frequent contact with other western Indian Ocean ports in the fifteenth century, the most important of which, in Gujarat, “supplied the Swahili city-states with the largest share of the one exchange commodity that was not only essential for extracting gold from the southern interior but also was extremely significant culturally: cloth⁵” (Prestholdt 1998:17). These contacts contributed to the development of indigenous styles of dress, corresponding to Swahili Islam, which were varyingly encouraged by British colonial policies⁶ and continue to inform coastal styles of today (see Chapter 5).

Local cloth production was widely practiced, as reported by early Portuguese arrivals and as suggested by the abundance of spindle whorls in the archaeological record of a number of coastal Swahili sites, with textiles produced in many East African towns, from Mogadishu⁷ to Sofala in present day Mozambique (Horton 1996). The most prized and technologically sophisticated fabric was woven on Pate Island, in the Lamu archipelago of Kenya, on the Somali border (Prestholdt 1998:24). The Swahili

⁵ “For centuries, Indian manufacturers produced textiles...for the East African market. Varieties of Gujarati indigo-dyed cottons, for example, were staples of the East African exchange since at least the fifteenth century. In the early nineteenth century, Kutch [in northwest India] became the center of Indian textile manufacturing for East Africa. By the 1820s, Zanzibar was the single most important market for the Mandvi (Kutch’s metropole) export trade, and weaving constituted the city’s largest industry” (Prestholdt 2004:25). The importance of Kutch for the *leso* trade in Kenya will be discussed further, below.

⁶ The historian Margaret Hay, in her analysis of early British colonial clothing policies in Western Kenya, notes that colonial administrators and Christian missionaries took equal umbrage with both nudity and the adoption, by some Kenyans, of “western-style” clothing, which was perceived as a shabby mimicry of sophisticated European styles (2004). In reaction to both equally unappealing appearances, British colonial policies attempted to impose a “coastal mode” of dress as far inland as Kisumu on the shores of Lake Victoria (2004:68). Preference was particularly given to the coastal fashions of Muslim men and, in Kisumu, “in some areas boys were given long white kanzus [Swahili male dress, see Chapter 4] for church services and Christian ceremonies” (2004:72). An anti-colonial, anti-Christian movement among young men in the same western areas of Kenya in the 1920s involved a group who dubbed themselves the “Fornicators” and expressed their hostility by donning indigenous (primarily animal skins) and “coastal dress” (2004:74).

⁷ Mogadishu cloth was exported to Egypt and the Persian Gulf area prior to the sixteenth century (in Prestholdt 1998: 24, see also Alpers 1981).

community of Pate produced their coveted cloth through a reliance on long distance Indian Ocean trading networks, receiving “Gujarati vessels and dispatch[ing] ships to the Indian subcontinent in order to procure cloth, silks in particular, to be unraveled and locally woven. By dismantling silks manufactured in Gujarat and China, the weavers of Pate maintained a supply of valuable silk thread from which they created textiles that conformed to local ideas of beauty” (ibid.:25). Further south in Kilwa, on the Tanzanian coast, artisans produced cotton cloth for local consumption and trade with the African interior in the fifteenth century, as recorded by Portuguese visitors (ibid.:27).

Thus the founding of the formal British colonial period in East Africa, from the 1880s through the establishment of Kenya Colony in 1920 (and administration of the 10 mile wide coastal strip or Protectorate of Kenya, obtained from the Sultan of Zanzibar), coalesced in a time and place already well integrated with global markets for consumer goods, particularly textiles, much to the chagrin of Western agents and travelers⁸. The historian Jeremy Prestholdt recounts the lamentations of Joseph Thomson, “who fit out a caravan for Lake Tanganyika in the 1870s [noting],

‘fashion was as dominant among Central African tribes as among the *belles* of Paris or London. Each tribe must have its own particular class of cotton...The absence of the required article at any particular point, might mean nothing less than disaster and failure to the expedition, as people will have nothing but the cloth or bead that happens to be in fashion. Everything else is of no value, and will hardly be accepted as a present’” [Thomson 1881, quoted in Prestholdt 2004:6).

Throughout the 19th century, cloth was at the center of East Africa’s global exchanges (ibid.). East African traders and consumers were among the chief contributors to the rise of the prodigious textile manufacturing centers of Salem and Lowell,

⁸ The following discussion of the 19th century East African textile trade is taken from Prestholdt 2004 (see also Prestholdt 1998 for Swahili cloth consumption circa A.D. 1450-1600).

Massachusetts in the 1800s, providing hides for New England tanneries and gum copal for varnish in the regional furniture industry, in exchange for “bleached and unbleached sheeting [“merikani”⁹], brown shirting, “common” shirting, “superior” shirting, unbleached and bleached drills, linen, red broadcloth, and handkerchiefs” – a trade that slowed and eventually ceased owing to the disruption of the U.S. Civil War¹⁰. Bombay merchants capitalized on this disruption, flooding the East African coastal market with British made “merikani” traded through India, and in turn investing these profits into local textile manufacturing. By the 1880s, East Africans were Bombay’s most important overseas consumers for its single most important manufactured export: unbleached cotton cloth - *merikani*. As Prestholdt’s research indicates, the emergence of Bombay as the Western Indian Ocean’s industrialization center was intimately linked to the sartorial preferences of Swahili and other East Africans (2004)¹¹.

While local weaving was considerably reduced throughout the 1800s, concentrating in southern Somalia throughout the twentieth century, imported cloth had become ubiquitous in East Africa. While one British traveler in the 1880s noted that village elders in Taveta (Coast Province, Kenya) wore up to fifteen yards of imported cloth at a time (French-Sheldon 1892, in Prestholdt 2004), it is unclear how East Africans of presumably modest means obtained the purchasing power to engage so thoroughly in the transnational cloth trade of the late 19th century. Though Prestholdt notes that East

⁹ *Merikani* is Kiswahili for “America,” as well as for the cloth originally sourced from New England.

¹⁰ As a testament to the importance of East African trade potential for emergent industries in the United States, the U.S. was the first country to establish an embassy in Zanzibar, in 1836 (Sheriff 1987).

¹¹ This work is in contrast to previous assumptions as to East Africa’s relative unimportance to the economic history of India and the Indian Ocean (see Chaudhuri 1985). For analyses of the mutually constitutive role of African consumption and European production, see also Steiner (1985) and Burke (1996).

African consumption of Bombay-manufactured goods peaked in the 1890s, he does not offer an explanation. It is probable, however, that declining revenues from ivory and cloves due, in part, to the eventual abolition of the slave trade in East Africa in 1909,¹² contributed to a decrease in consumer spending. Conversely, the emancipation of coastal East African slaves contributed to the development of a new form of vernacular fashion which began with small-scale local production and was subsequently industrialized in India in the early twentieth century (beyond the timeframe of Prestholdt's analysis). This garment, the *leso*, is discussed below.

The trade in cloth and clothing in the early years of the British colonial period in East Africa was thus considerably diminished, although the development of *leso* as a fashion for Muslim women of the coast, many of whom were former slaves (Fair 2001), was an exceptional innovation during this time. British colonial policies did not, however, cultivate the consumption, or the production, of cloth. Beginning with the formalization of Kenya's colonial status in 1895, the role of British economic investment in the territories was limited to the provision of infrastructure for settlement, expenditures on settler agriculture (particularly in the case of Kenya) and extraction of raw materials to support manufacturing in England. Investment in manufacturing in textiles, garments, and other consumer goods before 1945 was minimal, reflecting both the limited domestic market as was perceived by Great Britain and the pressures from British industrial capital to discourage any manufacturing for export which would threaten its own home industries (Swainson 1978a, 1978b, 1980).

¹² Legally, the slave trade ended in a formal decree in 1890 prohibiting the sale, exchange, and purchase of slaves in East Africa. Enforcement was, however, gradual (see Sheriff 1987).

This scenario was particularly evident in the textiles sector in England, which enjoyed strong tariff protection having successfully undermined competition from Indian cotton textiles through the manipulation of prices and trade to its advantage in the early 20th century (Porter and Sheppard 1998:409). Following WWII and a concomitant decline in the political-economic global role of the British, colonial policies shifted toward increased state interventionism to support the emergence of industrial production, maintained primarily by colonial settlers in and around Nairobi. These new policies served as a means for reducing large dollar deficits held by the British government and as a way of defending its markets from U.S. competition by investing behind the colonial “tariff wall,” while at the same time consolidating economic power as the purview of the settler population (Swainson 1980).

Between 1945 and independence in 1963, capital began to flow into local manufacturing sectors from the UK, the United States, Canada, and importantly for the local textile industries, the local South Asian/Kenyan community, whose members increasingly moved their merchant capital into manufacturing investment (ibid.). As noted above with respect to the nineteenth century trade in textiles, capital investments and credit from Kutch in northwest India, Bombay-based merchants, and local Kenyan descendants of families from Kutch were instrumental in developing the textiles industry within Kenya into the twentieth century. I will return to this discussion in the context of Kenyan *leso*, below.

Fashioning Regional Economies

Before turning to textile and apparel documents in the Kenyan archive, given the structure of British colonial rule in East Africa, it is necessary to expand this discussion beyond the borders of a particular colony or territory. While my focus remains Kenya, its stories of textiles and apparel are deeply enmeshed with those in Tanganyika and Uganda due to the regional basis of the colonial structure, including the establishment of a series of unions. This brief genealogy serves to situate the policies and debates discussed below (and in Chapter 3), within a regional East African context.

The multiple precursors to today's East African Community (EAC)¹³ began in the early twentieth century with the establishment of a joint Customs Department in 1917 between Kenya and Uganda. At Kenya's urging, an expanded Customs Union was formed with the inclusion of Tanganyika in 1923 (Nyanzi 1962). Kenya Colony, as the most "prosperous" of the British possessions in East Africa (and having the largest colonial settler population) dominated the Union's policies in an effort to establish itself as regional entrepôt. Despite the ensuing tensions, the East African High Commission (EAHC) was formed in 1948 to further strengthen inter-territorial cooperation amongst the three member territories (*ibid.*).

While the union struggled over various policies and programs throughout much of the early twentieth century, it gained momentary strength in the late 1950s as initial plans were prepared for the impending independence of Tanganyika (1961), Uganda (1962), and later Kenya (1963). The rising popularity of Pan-Africanism further underscored the

¹³ The EAC is a revived (as of January 2001) and reformulated union between Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda (currently) with plans for the inclusion of Rwanda and Burundi on July 1, 2007. Among the projects pursued through the EAC are a customs union and the application of a common tariff system for countries exporting to the EAC. Future projects, scheduled to take effect by 2010, include a common monetary system, common market, and a political federation with a shared, rotating president.

benefits of a regional union. The EAHC was reorganized in 1961 (and renamed the East African Common Services Organisation) as an agreement between the three territories and the United Kingdom, to reflect Tanganyika's independence¹⁴. Following full independence in all three territories, the union was once again reborn as the East African Community (EAC) in 1967, only to end ten years later (1977) amidst the irreconcilable differences prompted by the rise of Idi Amin in Uganda and the divergent socialist (Tanzania) and capitalist (Kenya) paths pursued by its signatories (www.eac.int/lvdp/eac.htm). The collapse of the EAC was so complete and divisive, the dissolution was followed by war between Uganda and Tanzania (leading eventually to the overthrow of Amin in 1979) and the closure of the Tanzania-Kenya border (from 1977 to 1983)¹⁵.

During these earlier periods of cooperation, textiles and apparel were fledgling industries, varying, in each of the three territories. With few manufacturing concerns, and limited cloth and garment imports, documentation too was minimal. Colonial correspondence archived in Nairobi indicates a focus on textiles beginning in 1943¹⁶. From the tone and content of these earliest documents, it is certain that discussions on matters of cloth, and to a lesser extent, clothing, existed prior to these letters¹⁷. With the

¹⁴ Among the few changes at the time was a decentralization of the military.

¹⁵ The renewal of cooperative links between the three East African nations will be taken up in greater detail in Chapter 3.

¹⁶ It is likely additional material is housed in colonial repositories in England, although the research conducted for the dissertation did not allow for this complementary investigation.

¹⁷ Archives are inherently problematic, personal, and piecemeal (Derrida 1996). What is absent from a given archive, and why, must be acknowledged, if only to recognize the incomplete nature of historical analyses dependent upon a (particularly colonial) paper trail, the subjective privileging of paper as the means by which 'history' is ensconced, and the particular state project channeled via a "National Archive." Due to logistical constraints, I was unable to consult colonial depositories in the United Kingdom that would certainly have offered "more complete" documentation. Nevertheless, what is present in an archive

exception of periodic updates on the procurement of khaki twill for police and military uniforms (PC/CP 6/4/2) and, conversely, a series of descriptive accounts of “native dress” of the various “tribes” (DC/KIS/1/14/1, AG/1/587), no additional correspondence was located in the archive prior to the 1940s.

Kenyan Textiles and Apparel, 1943-1963¹⁸

In obtaining information regarding the historical geographies of textiles and apparel in Kenya, I am particularly interested in items imported and manufactured locally, and in assessing the structure of these trades. In so doing, I am attentive to ethnicity as a potential mitigating factor in both the clothing articles available for consumption (and their varying appeal to consumers) and the ways, if any, cloth networks map onto particular cultural and ethnic affinities. Given the lack of substantial domestic apparel production in Kenya during the colonial period¹⁹ and the absence of cloth manufacturing, imports of the following cotton fabric items took precedence in the early archive (1943-1963):

does provide glimpses into matters considered both noteworthy in their initial discussion and worth saving (by someone for some reason) for posterity. Further constraints on archival research in Kenya include the “30 year rule” limiting researcher access to documents older than 30 years (for this project, through 1976). In Kenya, the process of searching the National Archive has, however, been ‘simplified’ by outfitting the facility with four computer terminals whereby an electronic search for keywords is now possible. As in any transition to a computerized format from a formerly manual activity, there is the potential for omissions, confusion, mislabeling, and inaccuracies. This indeed appeared to be the case, at times, here.

¹⁸ I utilize this twenty year timeframe in keeping with the emergence of an active correspondence on matters of textiles and apparel in the colonial archive in Nairobi beginning in 1943. I end this section in 1963 with Kenya’s independence (December 12, 1963).

¹⁹ While neglected in the colonial archival documents in Kenya, the *1986 Directory of Industries* published by the Government of Kenya provides an accounting of “manufacturers of wearing apparel (except footwear)” from the 1920s through 1981, based on the year each firm was established. This tabulation indicates the following number of clothing manufacturers founded in Kenya, by decade: 1920s (1), 1930s (6), 1940s (8), 1950s (29), 1960s (74 – including 13 prior to independence), 1970s (96), and 1980-81 (2). Firm size is noted where available, with the majority employing less than 49 workers (Central Bureau of Statistics 1986).

- a) Grey (unbleached) cotton fabrics, i.e., “amerikani”²⁰ and grey drill
- b) Bleached cotton (white plain cloth)
- c) Coloured cotton fabrics (yarn dyed cloth)
- d) Khaki drill
- e) Cotton fabrics dyed in the piece
- f) Printed cotton fabrics – khangas
- g) Printed cotton fabrics other than khangas²¹

In addition to the abovementioned cotton fabrics, several reports note the increasing consumption of “fabrics of synthetic fibres” beginning substantially in the late 1940s, decreasing in 1953, and then rising dramatically in the mid-50s (Ramm-Ericson 1964:18). Unlike cotton fabrics, the synthetic category is not divided “into dyed, bleached, and printed forms” due to a “lack of information in that respect from the East African trade statistics” (ibid:17). Throughout documents pertaining to textiles and clothing from the 1940s and 50s, ready-made apparel imports receive only one mention – in a 1953 document noting Japanese manufacture of “cheap cotton ready-made clothing” in Hong Kong (I.33/403/53). This dearth of reporting suggests that quantities of finished garments are not being imported into the East African territories at this time. In this respect, East Africa was similar to many contemporaneous parts of the world in the early twentieth century, including Europe and North America, whereby the trade in materials exceeded or rivaled that in finished garments.

In the final years of the colonial period, the local manufacture of ready-made garments forms the bases for several inquiries received in Kenya in the late 1950s by international firms eager to engage in garment production for Kenyan consumers. The

²⁰ “Amerikani” refers to unbleached cotton cloth in East Africa, originally obtained from the United States, as noted above, and known also as “merikani.”

²¹ The uses of *khangas* as both a positive and negative category and the basis by which cloth is categorized in the colonial textile archive further suggest its cultural importance, as discussed below.

first of these letters is a 1957 response to a Johannesburg-based South African firm (Weil & Aschheim Holdings Limited) interested in establishing clothing manufacture in Kenya Colony. The author, the Minister for Commerce and Industry (A. Hope-Jones), provides a wealth of information as to the state of garment production in late-1950s colonial Kenya. While it is clear that many small producers of apparel are present in the colony - likely single-machine operations of home or market-based tailors - the letter notes that:

five firms are occupied in a small way in the manufacture locally of dresses, particularly for African wear. The more general practice at present in operation is for the innumerable small shop-keepers in the African Reserves to make-up dresses from imported cloth. The operation of a large factory producing dresses on a mass production basis would be likely to be able to satisfy, at perhaps a cheaper price, the steadily increasing demand of the African for more fashionable and attractively designed dresses. The purchasing power of the African is increasing rapidly in the rural areas as a result of agricultural betterment schemes, and the provision of attractive consumer goods at reasonable prices is very desirable.

According to the Minister, there are “no restrictions on the manufacture of clothing in this Colony. A Customs tariff of 22% is levied on all imported clothing and no drawback of Customs duty is granted to clothing manufacturers on materials imported in connection with the manufacture of clothing in the Colony.” While, for the procurement of locally produced cloth, there is “a large textile factory (Nyanza Textiles Ltd.)...now in production [having been the first textile firm licensed in East Africa in 1954/5] at Jinja in Uganda – near the Kenya border – which will afford a source of supply of locally manufactured material for the dresses you have in mind.”

Licensing is explained as follows:

Under the terms of the East African Industrial Licensing Ordinance – which is enacted in similar terms in the three East African territories – the manufacture of cotton piece-goods is a scheduled industry. A licence [sic.] is, therefore, required not only for the manufacture of piece-goods but for any of the other related processes, such as the spinning of yarn, dyeing of locally made or imported piece-goods. The East African

Industrial Council has recently decided that it will only consider applications for the establishment of ‘vertical’ industries for the manufacture of cotton textiles.

Nevertheless, encouraging words conclude the letter, indicating that “[l]and suitable for industrial development is immediately available in the main centres and all necessary services are provided. The labour position is good. Kenya offers an important potential field for your industry” (AE/16/40).

By 1958, protections are put into place on behalf of Nyanza Textiles Ltd. of Jinja, Uganda. The factory, the first textile manufacturer to be licensed in East Africa (in 1954), was at the time producing cotton and khaki drill and unbleached cotton (“of course, not always...available in the right quality and quantity” (SIN.4/238.)). This shift in policy provides the first substantiated example of Import Substitution Industrialization, or ISI, with respect to the textile and garment industries in East Africa.

In minutes accompanying a meeting of the “Ad Hoc Committee on Drawbacks of Customs Duty,” it is similarly noted that “claims for refunds²² should be admitted only if accompanied by confirmation that the piecegoods [sic.] in question were not available from local manufacture” (ibid.). Coming several years prior to independence, and coupled with the restrictions permitting only vertically integrated garment manufacturers as of 1957, the timing of the customs duty revision suggests a growing awareness of both the need for local manufacture of raw materials to promote local apparel provision and, more generally, the economic development potential of textiles and garment production in Kenya.

²² The refunds noted here pertain to a reinstatement of a 50% refund of duty on raw materials that was abolished in 1956 and later revived in 1958. The return to a partial refund of duty was accompanied by an increase of the customs tariff for textiles and garments from, on average, a previous duty of 20% ad valorem (for cotton cloth, rayon, khaki drill, and readymade shirts and other garments) to 30% a.v. (Sin.4/238).

In 1960, a response was submitted to a similar Australian inquiry from London Textiles, Sydney, interested in establishing a garment factory in Kenya. The then-Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Industry, J.K. Mitchell, while noting that “there are, of course, a number of smaller firms which do make clothing to a limited extent,” provides firm names²³ and locations of the “only five substantial factories” in Kenya producing apparel: East African Clothing Factory Ltd. – Mombasa, Clothing & General Equipment Ltd. – Nairobi, Kenya Clothing Factory Ltd – Nairobi, Nairobi Clothing Factory – Nairobi, and Haria Clothing Factory – Nairobi. The letter is otherwise discouraging.

Rather than the production of cloth or ready-made garments, the colonial government’s concerns in the mid twentieth century centered on imported textiles from India, primarily, and the export of cotton from Uganda to Indian manufacturers. In a “private” memo (6 June 1951), rumored information on a new quota regime soon to be implemented by India is shared between a “Mr. Stone” (representative of Smith Mackenzie Ltd, the primary importer of *khanga* and other cotton print fabric to East Africa) and A. Hope Jones, Esq. Secretariat of the Office of the East Africa High Commission. In the letter, Stone details a new quota system whereby India will produce up to 97 million yards of cotton piece goods – a figure based on past exports – 64 million yards of which “are reserved for Pakistan, Indonesia, and Afghanistan” while “the

²³ A handwritten “factory registration” table was found amongst related archival material but lacking a date. The form is notable for its recording of “Industrial Classification” codes for each firm – all but three of which are “2430.” The remaining three are classified under code “2320” which may designate “knitting mills” based on the associated factory names²³. Factory registration numbers, company names, and addresses are also recorded and the table is organized on the basis of the number of workers per firm. The first group of approximately 38 firms (parts of the pages are missing) are designated by the number “03” all having “11-25 persons employed.” Of the extant pages, at least twelve (12) firms have 26-50 employees; a minimum 3 firms employ 51-75 persons; at least one firm has 76-100 employees while a minimum two (2) companies, including the still-operating Sunflag Textile and Knitwear, boast 101-150 employees. These numbers are, again, minimums, due to the poor preservation of the documents.

remaining 33 million yards will go to other destinations in soft currency” (AE/22/238).

Under this program, the initial 64 million yards quota would need to first be reached before export would be permitted to ‘other destinations in soft currency.’ Frustration is apparent later in the letter, which concludes with the following:

In any event, in spite of Uganda’s sale of cotton at such attractive prices, that is, attractive to Indian buyers, it seems that Indonesia and Afghanistan rate higher in consideration than Uganda or, for that matter, other soft currency destinations in the Commonwealth. This appears to be another instance of political cum economic expediency.

The exchange suggests the necessity of cotton textile imports within the East African High Commission at a time when local production was absent and when political and social unrest threatened the very existence of British colonial rule in East Africa (Berman 1999). Animating this communiqué is a concern for both the bottom line of a company dependent upon cotton cloth imports for the African consumer, and in a larger sense, a concern with respect to the possible unavailability of cloth in East Africa and the potentially troublesome consequences of shortages of such necessities in an already volatile situation.

An emergent ‘trade war’ between the East African territories and India is further instigated in a follow-up letter between the same parties, dated 18th June 1951. Here, the rumored export restrictions in India are confirmed. Additionally, an increase in export duty payable to India (from 10% to 25%) is described as effective June 1st 1951. A handwritten addition to the letter notes the possible bargaining potential of Uganda cotton to counter increased Indian export duty and the benefits of promoting Japan as an alternative market for raw East African cotton. The letter concludes with an extended exhortation, on behalf of “the African” [consumer]:

In this morning's press there is set out a tendency to consider a means of preventing Japanese textiles and other Japanese goods entering Colonial and Commonwealth markets at the lowest possible prices obtainable. While this may suit certain European countries, it cannot possibly assist the economy of East Africa, nor would it be in the interests of East Africa to prevent in any way the purchase of essential requirements in the cheapest world market unless, in equity, there was a quid pro quo in the form of higher return for goods supplied from East Africa to a relative extent. India has for some time supplied the cheapest piecegoods [sic.] generally and the bulk of the textile requirements of the African in particular, but in view of the uncertainty of action by the Government of India and the difficulty at present in trading with that country...there appears little alternative to obtaining supplies from these other sources of production which can offer not only prompt execution of orders and business on sound lines but have available the types and qualities of goods essential to the African at prices which are now approaching Indian quotations²⁴.

The role of the Indian or "Asian" community in East African commerce is and has been substantial²⁵. The impact of Indian merchants, financiers, and small business operators in East Africa of the nineteenth century cannot be underestimated, as the majority of the largest retailers in Zanzibar and Mombasa in the mid-1800s were of Indian-descent (Prestholdt 2004). By 1863, four-fifths of the entire trade of Zanzibar was mediated by British Indian subjects, most of who were from Kutch or Bombay (ibid.). Similarly, as the exchange above indicates, India (as a British colony) had itself long partnered with Kenya (and Kenya Colony) in the trade of manufactured goods, foremost among which were textiles.

²⁴ "Smith" and "Hope Jones" continue a spirited exchange on the subject throughout the summer of 1951, including a brief note in which the former urges the latter to apply an export tax of 25% on Ugandan raw cotton to India, in equity, "if India finds it necessary to put 25% Export Tax on piece-goods for the African here." This recommendation and indignation on behalf of "the African," is followed by Smith's handwritten aside, "In [that] event we shall probably be called...Imperialists!"

²⁵ A 1963 document prepared for the Minister of Commerce and Industry notes twelve firms that have been licensed to produce textiles in East Africa (Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika). In a corresponding table, columns indicate the name of each firm, the amount of cloth it is authorized to produce, its associated territory, the year in which each was licensed, and a fifth column labeled "Community" in which the ethnicity of the manufacturers is noted. A separate line of text beneath the table calls attention to the community column: "It will be seen, therefore, that of the total of 12 piecegoods licenses, at least 6 are to Hindu firms. Of these, 3 are not yet in production."

India established a market “for cotton piecegoods” in colonial Kenya “at a time when the United Kingdom, in particular, had difficulties both in production and shipping” (AE/19/151, 19 September 1958) – i.e., during two world wars. By the mid-twentieth century, India supplied nearly 50% of cotton goods trade in Kenya or 44.62% in 1956, dropping slightly to 43.64% in 1957, for a respective value of £2,911,813 and £2,972,078 (ibid.). At that time, the principal items manufactured in India and imported by Kenya included “cotton fabrics grey (unbleached) i.e. “americani;” light canvas drill – not dyed; cotton fabrics other than grey – bleached, dyed, mercerised, printed or otherwise finished – coloured i.e. cotton sheets and sheeting, pillow slips, calico, poplin, cloth which is woven from different coloured yarn as opposed to prints, prints; bed linen, table linen, toilet linen, kitchen linen and cotton blankets (ibid.).” By 1960, India’s rivals were few for most cotton items, though *khanga* proved the exception. To explore the importance of *khanga*²⁶, its associations with pre-colonial trade networks, and the patterns it suggests for contemporary apparel links in Africa and Asia, I turn to a discussion of the emergence of the cloth, its archival presence, and the historical trade memories of its continuing practitioners.

African Print Cloth, Rise and Decline

²⁶ While Swahili women’s *khanga* are a frequent topic of discussion, Muslim men’s *kikoi*, wrap garments worn around the waist (see Chapter 5), receive scant mention in the archive prior to the 1960s, with the exception, above, of a reference to their poor quality and associated Indian manufacture. A 1957 letter from Nairobi to Mombasa discusses the “Open General Licence [sic.] for the Arab trade” and, specifically, “Lungies and Foutahs” – the latter of which is the Yemeni term for *kikoi*, also spelled *futa* – as being dyed in the yarn and woven afterwards – a particular garment classification for trade purposes. In other reports, a troublesome shipment of 15 bales of “kikoy Dhabwani” from Hong Kong, imported to Kenya in 1954 by Roshanali Dawood Bros & Co, languishes in the port of Mombasa for lack of certification after being transhipped from Dar es Salaam and, later, Zanzibar (AE/22/225). While the fate of the bales is unresolved, both exchanges illustrate the pervasive trade routes and linguistic fluidity of mid-1950s East Africa. Despite the overarching presence of the East African High Commission for inter-territorial cooperation, occasionally insurmountable difficulties of regional trade are equally apparent.

Khanga, known also as *leso* on the Kenyan coast, are sold as conjoined rectangular pairs of cloth which must be cut and hemmed to form two pieces, most commonly worn in tandem as a skirt and matching head covering. The item, both cloth and garment, is characterized by a border on each of four sides and the inclusion of text printed in a narrow box in the bottom third of the fabric, referred to as the *leso*'s "name" or *jina* (Beck 2000). The text, which may include a proverb, insult, flirtation, or political slogan, amongst other correspondence, was printed in Arabic or Swahili written in Arabic script on the earliest *khanga* of the late nineteenth century and appears most often in Kiswahili today (Fig. 8). Regional language variations for *leso* text, geared toward specific domestic markets in the Indian Ocean region, include Arabic, Somali, Malagasy, other East African languages, and English (and marketed to tourists), as appropriate²⁷.



Fig. 8. Indian-made Swahili *leso*, souq al Moutrah, Muscat, Oman (August 2006).

²⁷ Somali *leso*, manufactured in India, are sold in a few small shops in the *markiti* area of Mombasa, particularly, and are distinguishable from Swahili *leso* by their Somali "names" (printed text) and larger size.

Leso emerged in the late 19th century in Zanzibar in the contested spaces shared by slaves and slaveholders as a means for freed women to fashionably assert their rapidly changing identities (Fair 2001, 2004). After the Sultan of Oman moved his residence to Zanzibar in the 1832, the island became a hub of commerce in spices, ivory, and slaves. Zanzibari dress reflected social status, ranging from the "elaborate costumes and headdresses" of the Omani elite to the abject wraps of those enslaved or indentured. The radical changes of emancipation in the 1890s were reflected in clothing created to give bodily form to people's new identities as free 'Swahili.' Thus *khanga* developed in Zanzibar and the East African coast as, initially, a clothing style of Muslim women, many of whom were slaves prior to emancipation in the 1890s but who adopted a Swahili identity and, in the process, forged a new visual style (Fair 2001). Within only three years, "island women...were said to be busily transforming themselves from slaves into 'slaves of fashion' with intensifying "cosmopolitan...sophistication" (Fair 2004: 18-21).

The earliest *leso* were made of lengths of three, square handkerchiefs, two strips of which were hand-sewn by coastal women into a large rectangle. The kerchiefs, introduced by the Portuguese, were themselves known as *leso* (Fair 2001, Pido 2002, Linnebuhr 2004). In the late nineteenth century, enterprising shopkeepers began to print similar square designs on lengths of *merikani*, with early motifs characterized by white dots on a black background, resembling local guinea fowl or *kanga* (ibid.). While certain stylistic renderings recur, including cashew nut and mango images, *khanga* designs run the gamut from everyday icons of modernity (fancy cars and Ferris wheels), to the

mundane (birds and bowls of peanuts), to political and iconic imagery (current and past presidents²⁸ and presidential hopefuls).

While initially locally manufactured on a small scale, *khanga* first appear in British trade reports as an import into East Africa in 1897 (Fair 2001). They were subsequently manufactured in India, primarily, although a series of trade conflicts between the British colonial government and Indian cloth manufacturers resulted in a wholesale shift of *leso* production to Japan and the Netherlands in the 1950s (detailed below). Currently *khanga* sold in Kenya are again imported from India, although a small number of shops in Mombasa and Nairobi carry *leso* manufactured in Tanzania, where local production persists²⁹.

In addition to their communicative potential, via the sayings prominently displayed on each *leso*, in the recent Kenyan past the cloth served as a source of income for women who previously sold the textiles door-to-door³⁰ (or to family members and friends). *Khanga* likewise provided an investment opportunity for Swahili women in Kenya who, until recently, could resell the cloth to shops in Mombasa to make extra cash when additional money was needed. Bashir, the owner of a small and well-established

²⁸ Both Julius Nyerere and current Tanzanian president Jakaya Kikwete's visages are commonly evident on *khanga* in Tanzania. When worn "properly", however, the central image of a *khanga* should be positioned over the wearer's bottom – a fact that is rumored to have prompted former Kenyan president Daniel arap Moi to ban his physical representation on Kenyan *leso* (Jamal, personal interview, 19 April 2006, Nairobi).

²⁹ By the time of the Arusha Declaration in 1967, in which Tanzania's goals of socialism and self-reliance were formally enunciated, investment from the People's Republic of China resulted in the founding of the URAFIKI (Friendship) textile parastatal in Dar es Salaam in 1966 for the manufacture of local cloth including *khanga* and *kitenge* (or wax prints). This factory remains one of the few in operation today for the production of local cloth for the domestic East African market. A second and still extant *khanga* company opened in Mwanza in 1966 with French backing - MWATEX (Jones 1981).

³⁰ One interviewee in Nairobi noted that this trade continues today in her neighborhood (around Ngara market) but interviewees in Mombasa, by contrast, noted the passing of the door-to-door *leso* trade variably in the 1980s and 1990s.

leso shop on Mombasa's Biashara Street, was among several sellers who ran a parallel business in used *khanga*³¹ together with new stock. During certain predictable times of the year (the start of a new school term when fees were due, for instance), women would bring their *leso* to him and other shopkeepers where they could obtain up to half of the original sale price, perhaps 200 Ksh. Bashir stopped trading in used *leso* in 2002, due to the influx of "cheap" Indian *khanga*. "I'm selling these [new Indian *khanga*] for 150, 200 Ksh! Who is going to buy a used *leso* when these are so cheap?!" he noted, clearly frustrated, to emphasize his abandonment of the business of used *khanga*³² (Bashir, personal interview, 4 June 2006, Mombasa).

Despite their geographically dispersed development linking Africa with Asia, Europe, and North America, *leso* are paradigmatically East African. While Muslim Swahili women continue to wear *khanga*³³, though to a lesser degree than in the recent past (based on both interviews and observation), their popularity has spread to other groups in East Africa, and beyond. As Nyerere had done in Tanganyika with Kiswahili -

³¹ Secondhand *leso* were known as *mfuo mmoja* or "once washed." (Bashir, personal interview, 4 June 2006, Mombasa). On the business card for his shop obtained in 2006 – a large rectangle twice the size of an average card and printed on older stock – Bashir's store name is followed by the self-designation "Retail Kings of Khangas. Specialists for: New & Second Hand Khangas (Soft Khangas). We have the biggest variety." I was able to purchase several "soft" *khanga* from this shop in 2002, just prior to the end of its trade. In Tanzania, where *khanga* are arguably woven more intimately into the fabric of everyday life, secondhand *khanga* remain available.

³² Dr. Donna Pido, an anthropologist and textile expert in Nairobi, purchased used *khanga* in quantities to ship to the United States where they were sold in Manhattan through the 1990s. Foreigners prefer the softness of a used *khanga*, she noted, and these sold well. Previously, *leso* quality enhanced the longevity of a garment, but the current Indian manufactured *leso* do not, unfortunately, have the same staying power (Pido 2002, personal communication).

³³ As one Mombasa woman noted, optimistically, "We will always have *leso* in Swahili homes. If a visitor comes in *buibui*, you want her to stay and feel at home...feel comfortable. You offer the woman *leso* to cover herself. You must pick the right name [Swahili text on the *leso*] and of course it must be clean. With this, she will feel at home." Nevertheless, there is a widespread perception of the declining popularity of *leso* amongst Swahili on the Kenyan coast. As the same informant noted, with visible disdain, "Wadigo [members of the Digo ethnic group] use more *leso* than anyone [else]." (Ashura, personal interview, 1 June 2006, Mombasa).

embracing a local vernacular and supporting its adoption at the national level -

Tanganyikans (and later Tanzanians) showed a similar widespread promotion of *khanga* as a garment of choice among women.

East African import data show a marked “imbalance of *khanga* consumption in Tanganyika (90%) versus Kenya, where its popularity was more limited to Swahili (10%) and Uganda (0%) by 1964, although consumption of *khanga* throughout the region as a whole had been dropping since the mid-1950s” (AE/22/228:6, see Table 1). The East African Union, in a survey of the textile industry prepared by the Development Finance Company of Kenya LTD in May 1964, predicted that the per capita consumption of *khanga* would decline by 5% annually during 1963-1970, providing a market for an estimated 10 million square yards total in 1970. Noting that at present (May 1964) there was “no local manufacture of printed khangas,” the report nevertheless speculated that in 1970 “about half the market could be covered by locally produced khangas” (ibid.). These predictions formed the basis for import substitution industrialization strategies enacted in Kenya from 1964, with particular emphasis on providing vernacular textiles for domestic consumption. In 1964, *khanga* imports to East Africa were primarily from Japan (over 85%), with the balance from The Netherlands (the remaining 15%).

The importance of *khanga*, culturally if not necessarily economically, is evident in their exceptionalism in the data tabulated for the textile industry throughout the twentieth century. In instances where the numbers are comparatively small (as is the case with respect to other printed cotton cloth or with synthetic fabric), *khanga* are nevertheless counted as a stand-alone category. The consistent representation of *khanga* apart from other cotton “piece goods” (from the earliest corresponding archival materials

obtained from the 1940s) suggests an overwhelming social value to the fabric, reflected in colonial correspondence, but not borne out by the quantity of its consumption. This same privileging of *khanga*'s cultural importance over its quantifiable characteristics similarly influenced post-colonial manufacturing policy, which, despite economic evidence to the contrary (declining sales, synthetic preferences, etc.), pursued *khanga* manufacture as a central means to 'producing development' (Abdulkader Kaderdina, personal interview, June 2006, Mombasa).

While India had been a "traditional source of supply for the majority of [textile] items...where the African market is concerned...imports of cotton [cloth] from Japan" increased in the years prior to 1960 (AE/22/225, 19 Sept 1958). With an anticipated rise "in the purchasing power of the indigenous [Kenyan] population"³⁴, India seemed poised to enjoy an increase in sales of cotton goods, particularly printed cloth, to Kenya (ibid.). This did not occur in the expected timeframe. While India had supplied *khanga* to the East African market in the early 20th century (Fair 2001), by the 1950s, India's *khanga* exports to Kenya fell to zero, with Japan and the Netherlands together supplying all of Kenya's *khanga* market by 1957³⁵. With respect to printed cottons (or *kitenge* – used for women's dresses), "[a]lmost 3/4 of the [East African] imports in 1957 came from India and most of the remainder from Japan." In the aftermath of the trade disagreements discussed above beginning in the early 1950s, India lost this favored status. "By 1962 the situation had reversed itself." (AE/22/228 17 February 1964:17). In 1962, Japan supplied

³⁴ Due to more favorable terms of trade for Kenyan primary commodity exports in the late 1950s.

³⁵ In terms of value, the top three *khanga* exporters to Kenya in 1956 were Japan (£87,294), The Netherlands (£34,007) and the United Kingdom (£1,168). By the following year, the United Kingdom had ceased its *khanga* exports entirely while Japan's and The Netherlands share of the indigenous trade decreased to £86,305 and £22,940, respectively (19 September 1958).

Kenya with 17 out of a total 24 million square yards of imported printed cotton fabrics
(not including *khanga*) (ibid.).

Table 1: Kenya's direct imports of *khanga*, 1955-1959 (with re-exports to Tanganyika and Uganda)*

	1955		1956		1957		1958		1959	
	Sq. Yds.	Value £	Sq. Yds.	Value £	Sq. Yds.	Value £	Sq. Yds.	Value £	Sq. Yds.	Value £
Direct	-	-	1,833,751	122,469	1,631,577	109,245	1,274,923	84,628	1,166,032	77,652
To Uganda	-	-	32,194	2,325	163,241	9,412	103,413	5,900	49,229	3,267
To Tanganyika	-	-	8,442	1,547	-481,789	-30,560	-300,246	-20,531	306,718	21,571
Net	1,627,177	115,275	1,795,115	118,597	1,950,125	130,393	1,471,756	99,259	810,085	52,314

* Table 1 showing a) direct imports of *khanga* into Kenya during the years 1956-1959 with b) the total net quantities transferred to the other two territories and c) the net imports into Kenya during the years 1955-1959. Note: The Customs definition of "Direct Imports" = "Goods entered at the time of importation for consumption or warehousing in Kenya, Uganda, or Tanganyika, including in both cases goods which are subsequently re-exported." The definition of "Net Imports" is the same as for "Direct Imports" with the following addition – "which have been added or from which have been deducted goods transferred interterritorially." (C/TEX/8/197 19 September 1958).

Khanga of Japanese manufacture are noted in archival documents beginning in the 1950s, although interviews, below, suggest that *khanga* manufacturing began in Japan in the 1930s and resumed after World War II, with *leso* marked “made in occupied Japan” (Kaderdina, personal interview, June 2006, Mombasa). In 1953, a British “economic controller” from Zanzibar wrote to Nairobi’s Director of Trade regarding the importation of Japanese *khanga* manufactured in Hong Kong. Here the concern involved the doubt, on the part of the author, that Hong Kong-made *khanga* contained “the minimum 25% Commonwealth content” to be certified for the East African market. Also at stake were “considerable quantities of cheap cotton ready-made clothing in Hong Kong,” produced by these same Japanese manufacturers. These garments, the first mention of ready-made apparel for public consumption in the archive, are said to have already been “accepted in East Africa” (i.e., already possessing a buyer/distributor) were it permissible to import the goods without restrictions as to “actual British content” (I.33/403/53).

Later that same year, a “Private and Confidential” report made by the British Cotton Industry Export Team to the Government of Tanganyika detailed the local market for cotton piece goods for the benefit of the “home industry.” The methodology used in compiling the report included interviews with key informants, particularly Government Departments, Chambers of Commerce, principal importers, merchants and retailers, and, notably, “a tour of the Native bazaar.” As summarized in the team’s findings, clear patterns emerged. Most notably was an overarching concern that Japanese manufacturers might enter the East African market and drive out U.K. imports if an import licensing policy then in place is eliminated or altered to allow for Japanese textiles. “It is the usual

Japanese practice,” bemoans the author, “when they are excluded from the market, to quote extremely attractive prices. When, subsequently, they are allowed to enter the market, it is universally known that their prices tend to increase and the quality of their goods to decrease” (1953:1). The resemblance to contemporary discourses on Chinese commodities animating East Africa is striking (see Chapter 7).

The British team similarly staked its claim to the *khanga* market, dismissing “the trade in grey goods and kikois and similar lower type goods” which they predict will remain (deservedly) “in the hands of India.” “With regard to khangas, the [U.K.] industry could supply the market’s total needs...The opinion was reliably expressed by a few of the experienced Indian merchants that, if a certain share of the khanga trade were to be given to the Japanese, no benefit would accrue to the ultimate consumer, but the sale-prices would continue to be at higher levels.” (ibid: 3).

The U.K. team appeals to the deeply imbricated colonial relationship between Tanganyika and Britain (noted elsewhere in the document as “the spirit of reciprocity” between the two) in requesting preferential treatment and the continued barring of Japanese cloth exports into the East African market by “plead[ing], in justification...that this is by no means an unreasonable advantage for a country [U.K.] which takes 40 or 50% of Tanganyika’s exports and expends great sums on services within the country.” This plea offers a transparent nod to the Britain’s fledgling ‘development’ investments in Tanzania, which, at this point, exclude most manufacturing, including textiles.

Finally, the Lancashire team noted that “there are many signs that the African consumer in Tanganyika is widening his taste and seeking better quality goods. This indicates a strong latent demand for quality materials. The United Kingdom cotton

industry is admirably equipped, because of its specialised structure and experience, to cater for this demand and is anxious to play its part in stimulating the discrimination of the African consumer.” This was to be done, in part, via “constant and regular contact between United Kingdom exporters and the [local] market” given the “need and desirability of regular visits in order to keep abreast with developing trends and consumer tastes and wants.” (1953:3).

The team appears to have made a positive impression, as their report is followed in the archive by a letter³⁶ supporting the requests. In particular, author Talbot-Phibbs agrees “to an extension of the restrictions against Japan for at least two years, and following that (as a second best) the establishment of some form of quota which would confine Japanese imports to the cheaper cloths leaving the more expensive prints, etc. to be supplied by the United Kingdom and the Continent” (AE/19/159).

A network of “the principal European and Asian³⁷ traders in Nairobi” is consulted in several documents for their up-to-date analyses of trends and stocks on hand in 1954³⁸. The importers note a general downturn in the market for cotton textiles “due to a preference for printed rayons.” A particular geography of trade, related to perception of quality, is likewise noted.

³⁶ The letter was written by J.O. Talbot-Phibbs of the Dar es Salaam Secretariat and addressed to G.D. Parkin, Esq., Director of the Department of Trade and Supplies in Nairobi.

³⁷ In East Africa, “Asian” generally refers to Indian, although Sri Lankans and Pakistanis, of whom there are much smaller communities, would also be designated “Asian.”

³⁸ This list includes the following firms and, in parentheses, the surname of their representative: Smith Mackenzie (Hodgson), T.O.M. (Buckling), Hemraj Bharmal (Lakampshi), Nemchand Fulchand (Fulchand), E.A. Trading (Shah), and Mountain & Co. (Irvine). In a 1955 follow-up telephone survey (8 August 1955, File No. C/TEX/8, C.A. Rankine) of “local firms regarding the feel of the textile market in East Africa with particular reference to Kenya,” six (6) textile importers are listed, with three of the firms reappearing from the previous year: British East Africa Corporation (Mr. Ashworth), Smith Mackenzie (Indian Broker), Mountain & Company (Irvine), Nemchand Fulchand (Mr. Fulchand), Twentsche Overseas Ltd. (Mr. Bockling), and African Mercantile (Mr. Vile).

There are certain qualities and types of goods which are best imported from India such as Mariakani [sic.], while some of the cheaper prints and lower grades of rayon are best obtained from Japan. Evidently, the British textile manufacturers have their own specialities which sell well on the East African market such as Stockports³⁹ and the higher grades of prints. Many of these better quality prints are coming into Kenya by parcel post. My opinion of the market is that the importers of the Indian, Japanese and Czechoslovakian textiles do not entirely welcome an influx of British goods as this may depress an already over-stocked bazaar (AE/22/238).

With respect to the ethnic dynamics of the East African textile trade, a letter dated 8th December 1954 from London to a British colonial representative in Kenya serves to introduce a Mr. Battersby, Advertising and Publicity Manager of the Calico Printers' Association Limited "which is the major firm in the Lancashire textile printing industry." The letter details Mr. Battersby's plans for an upcoming two-month trip to assess the textile market in East Africa.

One matter in which he is especially interested is the step being taken to encourage the small African retail trader to enable him to compete with the Indian merchant. He holds the view that the Indian merchant does little, if anything, to cater for the tastes of the African consumer in textile designs and would...like to explore the possibility of a direct supply of textiles to the African trader without passing through Indian hands" (AE/3/738).

Mali ya Abdulla⁴⁰

Indian connections with *leso* were born, in part, from earlier patterns of trade, investment, migration, and cloth production for East African coastal consumers, as discussed above. The oldest and most prestigious of the *khanga* firms in East Africa, *Mali ya Abdulla*, offers a contemporary link with past Indian Ocean connections predicated on regional trade in vernacular fashions (Fig. 9). The Kaderdina family, founders of *Mali ya Abdulla*, has been at the forefront of *leso* design, including the addition of the boxed text

³⁹ Stockport itself was an area of woolen, then silk, and, in the 19th and 20th century, cotton fabric manufacture near Manchester, England. It is mentioned several times in the archival documents and is also referenced as "White Stockport Drills."

⁴⁰ Abdulla's Goods, or Abdulla's Wealth.

or *jina*⁴¹ which was reportedly an early twentieth century inspiration of the firm's founder, Kaderdina Hajee Essak⁴². Oral histories of the business, recounted by Abdulkader Kaderdina, (personal interview, 29 May and 6 June 2006, Mombasa) offer insight into the ethnic networks, embedded relations, and colonial constrictions within which the *leso* trade operated.



Fig. 9. Mali ya Abdulla, Biashara Street, Mombasa (May 2006).

⁴¹ *Khanga* text is often a Swahili proverb – for example, *Elimu haimtupi mtu* “Education forsakes no one” or *Pombe si maji* “Palm wine is not water” – though a *leso* “name” may instead be taunting, celebratory, bawdy, submissive, overtly political, or kind, amongst other sentiments. Many are similarly obtuse, rendering direct translations misleading. A number of *khanga* names refer to clothing and I collected several during the course of this research: *Nguo ya kuazima haisitiri matak*o – Borrowed clothes do not cover your bare bottom, *Mwanamke ni nguo ya juu* – A woman is like underwear (i.e., “easily discarded,” in the words of one male interviewee), *Mke hapigwi kwa fimbo bali hupigwa kwa nguo* – A wife is not hit with a stick but is hit with clothes (i.e., “don’t beat your wife, treat her right and reap the rewards”) and *Usimlaumu dobi kaniki ni maumbile* (Don’t blame the dhobi [washerman/woman], *kaniki* [a black/indigo cloth] is a natural condition (i.e., “it’s not because the fabric you’re wearing is black that your skin is also black”).

⁴² The current director of Mali ya Abdulla, Abdulkader Kaderdina, supported this assertion of his grandfather’s innovation (personal interview, 29 May 2006, Mombasa).

The firm's genesis dates to 1835 in the city of Mandvi, Kutch district, in Gujarat state, northwest India. His employer sent Essak Kaderdina, the then 13 year old great grandfather of the current proprietor, Abdulkader Kaderdina, to Mombasa, where he traded in beads, mirrors, and *kaniki* [indigo-dyed cloth], in exchange for tusks and animal hides. Sensing potential opportunities offered by East Africa, he chose to remain in Mombasa, as one of a growing contingent of Memon⁴³ émigrés. According to Kaderdina, in an alternative telling of *khanga* origins (Mirza and Strobel 1989, Fair 2001), *leso* developed from head scarves or *odhni* (in the Kutchi language), measuring two yards long and 45 inches wide, and sporting a spotted design resembling East African guinea fowl or *kanga*. Essak Kaderdina left his Mandvi-based employer and began importing *odhni* directly from India, through Zanzibar to Mombasa. In 1887, Essak's son Kaderdina founded the firm in Kibokoni [Old Town] Mombasa, moving to Biashara Street, now the center of the *leso* and *kikoi* trade in Kenya, near the city's main market (MacKinnon Market) in 1905.

Where the earliest fabrics had been obtained through familial trading networks based in Kutch, British colonial policy at first mandated the sourcing of *leso* from British firms in Manchester in the early twentieth century, a situation whereby "Europe was springing with textile mills trying to feed its product to its colonies." Later the company forged ties to Vlisco, a Dutch manufacturer of wax prints⁴⁴ (see also, below). From the

⁴³ The Memon community, a minority ethnicity from Gujarat whose members, Sunni Muslims, spread throughout the Indian Ocean basin in the 19th century, established themselves as merchants and entrepreneurs in towns throughout the littoral (Levin 1974). Bashir, the Mombasa *khanga* trader noted above, is himself Memon and a relative of the Kaderdina family.

⁴⁴ Vlisco Textielfabrik, founded in Helmond, Holland, in 1846, remains the premiere manufacturer of African prints or "veritable Dutch wax," setting the standard for "African" print cloth (*vitenge*) throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Unlike in East Africa, the name "Vlisco" remains well-known in West Africa, where *le wax* is far more popular. In an unusual production geography, Vlisco prints continue to be manufactured in

1930s until Japan entered World War II, following the war while occupied, and through the mid-1970s, *leso* were produced by Japanese manufacturers. The firm was nevertheless similarly required to utilize the services of Smith Mackenzie, a British-owned *khanga* wholesaler (noted above in archival correspondence), as the company was “prohibited” from forging its own contacts. Throughout, extant family ties to cloth producers in Kutch were cultivated, but were forced to languish due to restrictive policies regarding Kenya Colony trade with South Asia in the aftermath of Indian independence.

Kaderdina entered the family business in 1957 at 16 upon his father’s death, a necessity he continues to regret, as he had hoped to pursue higher education. His uncle, the “Abdulla” of the company name, ran the business until 1974. Without children of his own, he sold the firm to his nephew, who by then had weathered the years of pre- and post- independence at the nominal helm of the firm.

With independence came the establishment of the Kenya National Trading Corporation (KNTC)⁴⁵, which appointed Kenyan (African) traders as their wholesale agents for the many consumer goods under its auspices, including *leso*. Kaderdina showed no love lost for KNTC, which officially ceased operations in the spring of 2006, describing the entity “like other government organizations - full of thieves!” The establishment by the Kenyan government of Rivatex in the mid-1970s solely for the local production of *leso* and *vitenge* (African wax prints), was, unlike the K.N.T.C., an example, initially, of the best government initiatives after independence: “Then we were

the Netherlands for sale in Africa, although a number of subsidiary manufacturing plants (in Ghana and South Africa) have been built locally (www.vlisco.com).

⁴⁵ The Kenya National Trading Corporation or KNTC was a parastatal monopoly established in 1964 to control wholesale trading of consumer commodities including sugar, cooking oil, *khanga*, and secondhand clothes (Leys 1980).

feeding Tanzania as well as ourselves [with *khanga*]. People smuggled Rivatex *leso* to Tanzania. Despite the breakdown [a reference to the border closure of the 1970s] the culture is the same.”

Before the resumption of Indian manufacture of Swahili *leso*, “Oman, the Comoros, everyone, was buying *khanga* from Kenya.” Mali ya Abdulla served as Rivatex agents on the coast, selling their high quality cloth. Blaming the usual litany of woes – mismanagement, corruption, and bureaucratic stagnation – Kaderdina laments the events of 1995, when Rivatex stopped manufacturing *leso*. The company continued production of *vitenge* until 1997, when the plant closed its Eldoret operations entirely. It remains moribund, despite occasional news reports of potentially interested buyers⁴⁶ (Nation 2007, Oyuke 2007).

Now, “people are getting cheaper.” While the standard *leso* size remains 66 by 46 inches, current manufacturers have begun to cut corners. Whereas *leso* (including those manufactured by Rivatex) were previously printed using copper rollers of a fixed size “from China,” the shift toward Indian production in which *khanga* are silk screened through a table printing method, has allowed manufacturers to adjust the size and reduce their costs. With inflation, Kaderdina insists the price is the same (pairs of Mali ya Abdulla *khangas* sold for 300 to 350 Ksh in 2006, or \$4.30 to \$5 USD), but

⁴⁶ The primary *khanga* and *kitenge* production facilities previously extant in Kenya, including Rift Valley Textiles (RIVATEX) in Eldoret, which closed all spinning and weaving production in 2000, although *leso* manufacture ended in 1995, and Nanyuki’s Mount Kenya Textile (MOUNTEX), which operated on and off through the late 1990s before closing in 2000, remain for sale and were until recently attracting the interest of prospective investors from India, the United States, and Thailand, amongst others (East African Standard, 2003). The professed aim of potential investors is, however, production of export apparel, rather than goods for the domestic market (ibid.). On 25 July 2007, the East African Standard and Daily Nation reported comments by Minister of Trade and Industry, Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, indicating the defunct RIVATEX factory in Eldoret will re-open soon as part of the government’s efforts to fast track revival of textile factories (Oyuke 2007 http://www.eastandard.net/hm_news/news.php?articleid=1143971820, Nation 2007 http://www.nationmedia.com/dailynation/nmgcontententry.asp?category_id=3&newsid=103041).

manufacturers are compensating with respect to cloth size and quality. Mali ya Abdulla, by contrast, “always put quality above anything else,” and frequent visits to Indian manufacturers⁴⁷ (primarily in Jetpur,⁴⁸ Gujarat), ensure the correct size and 100 percent cotton content are maintained. While there are “so many *khanga* suppliers in Mumbai,” Kaderdina relies on only three⁴⁹, preferring “the devils” he knows “to the angels” he doesn’t.

Although *khanga* are no longer manufactured in Kenya, *khanga* popularity persists in diminished form. To meet this demand, *khanga* are imported primarily from India and Tanzania. Indian manufacturing, once the mainstay of *khanga*, only resumed in the mid-1990s. Kaderdina credits the strong ties between the Indian communities in East Africa and in India to this resurgence, noting that Indian textile manufacturers were keenly aware of the problems plaguing the local production facilities in Kenya and looked for potential opportunities. Once Kenyan *leso* production began to falter, Indian firms returned to *khanga*. Nevertheless, he has lost considerable business in the process. Indian firms and suppliers have marketed themselves throughout the *leso* world. Where

⁴⁷ Mali ya Abdulla design all the *khanga* they market in house, with a team of three artists who use pen and ink and, beginning in 2003, computer. The design facilities are housed upstairs from their main store in Mombasa (there are two stores, a smaller one is located on the next block of Biashara Street). Designs contain up to four screens or colors, orders are placed for a minimum of 3,000 pairs, and four to six designs are created each week. A 20-foot container arrives in Kilindini Harbor in Mombasa each four to eight weeks with the new items. Clearing a container can, however, take from 15 days to over six months. Once cleared and in the shop, a team unfurls and refolds each *khanga* to assess its correct size and uniform quality.

⁴⁸ Kaderdina described Jetpur, which he has visited “many, many times,” as a small town that was, until recently, devoted to the production of saris for the domestic Indian market. In a dramatic change over the past five to ten years, the town has shifted to printing *khanga* and *kitenge* for export to East African consumers.

⁴⁹ Clearly proud of the company’s leading position, Kaderdina offered me an email from a Mumbai supplier – Milan Barot – who had been contracted to produce 70 *leso* designs by a shop in Muscat, Oman. Barot decided to vet the Swahili text of each *khanga* through Kaderdina to be certain the manufacturer would not be printing any phrases that were obscene or otherwise “inappropriate.”

once Mali ya Abdulla supplied *khanga* to Oman, Madagascar, and the Comoros, retailers in these locations now source their own designs, directly from India.

While Kaderdina is less than impressed by the quality of contemporary Indian-made *khanga*, noting they are neither the requisite thickness of past products, nor appropriately colorfast, he remains guardedly optimistic as to the future of East African *leso*. “*Khanga, kitenge*, they will go on. Until and unless these ladies prosper – educationally, materially – and go for Western boutiques. But the West will never allow this to happen.”

Postscript

Following independence in 1963, the Kenyan government identified the textile industrial sub-sector as a “core industry” with the potential for inducing rapid economic development in Kenya under national ISI strategies (Republic of Kenya 2001, 2003, Kimani 2002, Omolo 2006). Despite declining consumption of printed *khanga* since the mid-1950s (AE/22/228:6) and despite reservations as to the economic wisdom of producing fashionable print cloth in East Africa for a fickle market⁵⁰, *leso* and other African prints were initially a cornerstone of Kenyan post-independence textile manufacture, as they were similarly in Tanzania (de Valk 1996).

⁵⁰ The process of *khanga* production, and its economic viability, is described in a 1964 report: “The fabric is woven as grey cloth, then printed (sometimes after bleaching). The printing process uses rolls for each individual pattern, and these rolls are costly. In general, unless each roll can be used for a minimum run of 200,000 sq yds or more the printing process is uneconomic. Precise details of the maximum amount of cloth of an individual pattern which can be sold in the EA market are not available but experience elsewhere suggests that the figure may be no more than 10,000 sq yds, rising to 30,000 for an exceptionally popular design. This means that unless EA producers can either export printed cloth (which seems unlikely at present) or have an arrangement with an outside manufacturer to borrow individual rolls to produce the maximum of each design for the local market, the manufacture of prints locally may well be uneconomic, at least without some extra protection” (Stoneham 1964 - AE/22/228:4).

By 1966, *khanga* continued to be imported into Kenya (and East Africa as a whole) from Japan and The Netherlands in high proportions. Manufacturing of *leso* would not begin in Kenya in any appreciable form until the mid-late 1970s, with the founding of Rift Valley Textiles Ltd.⁵¹ in Eldoret (1975) and Mount Kenya Textiles Ltd. in Nanyuki (1978), whose *khanga* set the standard for quality in the brief heyday of local manufacture (Directory of Industries 1988, see also Kaderdina personal interview, above). Change was, however, immediate in the importation process, reflecting decolonization attempts, particularly the post-independence policy of “Kenyanisation” or “indigenization”⁵² and the shifting positioning of Kenya as a postcolonial state in-the-making (Ikiara et al. 2004).

A series of letters (C/I&E/2/14/32), between increasingly antagonistic participants in the *khanga* import business in 1966 highlights the issues involved in remaking the global trade networks of independent Kenya. In this exchange, the Kenya National Trading Corporation (KNTC)⁵³ has emerged as the arbiter of international commerce concerning a multitude of consumer products, including *khanga*.

⁵¹ The primary *khanga* and *kitenge* production facilities previously extant in Kenya, included Rift Valley Textiles (RIVATEX) in Eldoret, which closed all spinning and weaving production in 2000, although *leso* manufacture ended in 1995, and Nanyuki’s Mount Kenya Textile (MOUNTEX), which operated intermittently through the late 1990s before closing in 2000.

⁵² This policy of “Africanisation” pursued under the first post-independence presidency of Jomo Kenyatta (1963-1978), sought to support and enable indigenous entrepreneurs in manufacturing and other economic sectors through a number of programs including the Ndegwa Commission, which permitted civil servants to engage in business as one avenue for the participation of emergent local elites in entrepreneurial activity (Ikiara et al. 2004). While these policies are perceived as contributing to an erosion of civil service efficiency and integrity, enabling the serious corruption scandals plaguing Kenya, they are nevertheless credited (or reviled) for generating a class of wealthy and aggressive Kenyan entrepreneurs (Kaplinsky 1978).

⁵³ While Kenya banned secondhand clothing from 1985 to 1991, the KNTC controlled a legal secondhand or *mitumba* trade in the 1960s after independence (see Chapter 4), in addition to a plethora of consumer necessities including sugar, cooking oil, and textiles. The scorn heaped upon KNTC by Kenyan citizens remembering incidences of price fixing, etc., particularly from the 1970s, was a repeated topic of discussion during my 2006 fieldwork. Attempts to interview members of the Ministry of Trade and

In the documents, Smith Mackenzie & Company Limited (SM&CL) – a longtime European-owned wholesale importer of *khanga* from Asia and Europe to East Africa (and frequent contributor to the archival record on textiles as evidenced by their repeated mentions, above) – accused “Mwananchi General Agencies” of having inappropriately obtained proprietary *khanga* design and production information. At issue were thwarted attempts by SM&CL to obtain an import license⁵⁴ from KNTC, despite “over fifty years” in the *khanga* business in Mombasa. This new firm, “Mwananchi⁵⁵ General Agencies” had not only obtained an import license from KNTC but, had verbally taunted Smith Mackenzie with assurances that they would not be granted a license “now or in the future.”

More troublesome to Smith Mackenzie, Mwananchi had submitted an order and supporting schedule to the Dutch manufacturer Vlisco Textieldrukkerijen (see Kaderdina, above) that was “an exact reproduction of our [SM&CL] own printing instructions and specifies shipment of [8] designs which are our property.” This information, including registered design number, motif, color, and printing schedule, had been furnished by Smith Mackenzie to KNTC in support of their (unrealized) import license application.

Industry on the subject of KNTC were met with professed ignorance. Younger members of the Ministry with whom I spoke claimed, for instance, to be unaware of its existence. While much diminished in scope, in September 2006, President Mwai Kibaki appointed the current Chairman of the KNTC Board of Directors, Anwar Hussien, for a three-year term (Gazette Notice No. 8782, http://www.kenyalaw.org/KenyaGazette/view_gazette.php?title=2070).

⁵⁴ To achieve Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) objectives following independence, the Kenyan government relied on a variety of policy instruments including tight regulation of import licensing (in addition to an overvalued exchange rate, high tariff barriers, foreign exchange controls and quantitative restrictions to protect local producers against foreign competition) (in Ikiara et al. 2004, see also Bienen 1990, Roemer 1993, Hill 1994).

⁵⁵ “Mwananchi,” or “citizen” in Kiswahili, denotes not only a legal affiliation with a country but may be invoked to suggest patriotism (*uananchi*) and a cultural affinity with the land/nation (*nchi*). Used as a corporate name in the years following independence, “Mwananchi” is unambiguously political and, by extension, anticolonial and African Kenyan.

The accusations thus included charges of collusion between Mwananchi and KNTC. When Vlisco itself joined the fray on December 14, 1965, in support of their longstanding European importer, they received a stern rebuke from KNTC. While Vlisco notes in their letter that they were not aware of the existence of the KNTC and they are not prepared to deal with anyone other than their agent (SM&CL), KNTC responds by clarifying their role. “We should like to bring to your notice that the Kenya National Trading Corporation is a government owned enterprise and that, among other items, it is the sole channel of printed khangas imported into our market” (L. Riitho Ndungi, Imports/Exports Manager, KNTC, 11 February 1966).

This exchange offers, in abbreviated and idiosyncratic form, a glimpse into the “indigenization” of the textiles and apparel sector in postindependence Kenya, or to what Leys et al. discuss as “the formation and importance of an African fraction of the capitalist class, constituted out of the agents of accumulation in both trade and agrarian production in the colonial and immediately postcolonial period” (1980:307). Through indigenization policies, Kenya rapidly strove to reduce settler capital in Kenya following independence in 1963. In large part, this “Africanisation” of colonial economic policies after independence centered on the development of a manufacturing sector devoted to production of textiles and apparel for the domestic market⁵⁶.

From the reported dynamism of the trans-Indian Ocean trade in textiles through the nineteenth century, when Kutchi traders competed with American textile agents to secure the lucrative East African market, through the current resurgence of Gujarati

⁵⁶ Processes of “Kenyanisation” within the textiles and apparel industry extended “backward” to the founding of cooperative societies which, assisted by the government, purchased cotton ginneries from colonial settlers following independence (Omolo 2006:148).

fabric networks, the quality of cloth and clothing available in East Africa and the status associated with fine “African” garments has reputedly diminished. Where once East African consumers were noted for their sartorial sense and sumptuous fabrics, the combined colonial legacies of extraction and disenfranchisement rendered the domestic market an afterthought. Swahili women’s fashionable innovations created persistently appealing vernacular styles that themselves contributed to the development of regional and local manufacturing industries. Yet protectionist colonial policies, established to aid faltering British industries and the settler community in Kenya, while serving to punish newly independent India⁵⁷ (with the residual effect of thwarting established ethnic networks of Indian cloth merchants in East Africa) contributed to a climate of decline.

While Kaderdina’s narrative, of Japanese and Dutch manufacturers producing quality *leso*, “Mali ya Abdulla” providing *khanga* throughout the Indian Ocean, and Kenyan-made garments setting a new standard, risks invoking a nostalgic reverie of the “good old days,” interviews and archival documents support a similar portrayal. Unlike the blanket blame foisted on secondhand clothing for collapsing local textile and garment industries, including *leso* manufacturers, colonial archival documents indicate a decline in *khanga* preceding independence. Throughout the archive, the quantity and monetary value of *leso* is indicated as considerably below other “cotton piece goods other than *khanga*,” yet data is consistently tabulated for *leso* as a discrete category.

When post-independence Kenyan manufacturing policies opted to focus, in part, on *khanga*, (de Valk 1996), President Jomo Kenyatta’s government did so despite these studies in the late colonial period forecasting precipitous declines in *leso* consumption through the 1960s and the early 1970s. The cultural value of *khanga* superceded its

⁵⁷ In 1945.

economic returns, while the current diminished quality of the garments has rendered even persistent *leso* wearers less likely to amass the individual quantities once prized by Swahili women (Salma, personal interview, 24 May 2006, Mombasa). If not solely or primarily responsible for the decline in *leso* consumption (and production), secondhand clothes or *mitumba* are nevertheless the garments with which contemporary Kenyans are most notably associated. This rise in the importation of *mitumba* occurred as the Kenyan government shifted its industrialization strategies from creating garment jobs and the resultant clothes for the domestic market to manufacturing apparel for export.

Chapter 3:

The political economies of textiles and apparel in Kenya, pt. 2: *export processing*

In a June 2006 *New York Times* editorial, columnist Nicholas Kristof pleaded for Western aid to Africa in the form of “schools, clinics, and sweatshops.”¹ Kristof’s argument - that garment manufacture is an admittedly low paying option, but “if Africa could establish a clothing export industry, that would fight poverty more effectively than any foreign aid program” - is being implemented by Kenyans since a shift toward liberalization in the 1980s. Attempts to nurture an export apparel sector in Kenya were sluggish throughout the 1990s, until a brief period of rapid expansion following the passage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) by the U.S. Congress in 2000. Since the completion of the Multifiber Agreement (MFA) governing global trade in textiles and apparel on January 1, 2005², the sector has experienced precipitous decline. Taken together, current results thus far suggest that despite Kristof’s exhortations, poverty, inequality, and precariousness have risen in inverse proportion to the investment,

¹ “In Praise of the Malignant Sweatshop” <http://select.nytimes.com/search/restricted/article?res=F00D10FA3F550C758CDDAF0894DE404482#>, last accessed 30 July 2007.

² The Multifiber Agreement (also Multifiber Arrangement) in place from 1974 through 2004 regulated global trade in garments and textiles through the allocation of quotas to “developing” country exporters for imports into major markets. Under the WTO-Agreement on Textiles and Clothing, a ten-year phase out of the quota system was enacted in 1994 and completed in 2004.

concessions, and leniency implemented by Kenya to attract the export apparel production synonymous with sweatshops.

Kristof's call to the West echoes the prescriptives of mainstream economists and development "experts" who have long urged investment in and expansion of outward processing industries to generate jobs and, ostensibly, eradicate poverty (Sachs 2005). As "the first rung on the ladder" to development (ibid:11), export oriented industrialization offered Kenya an antithetical approach to the "failed" policies of ISI adopted after independence. Packaged together with the enforced austerity of structural adjustment (Coughlin and Ikiara 1988), export production as adopted in Kenya nullified previous, short-lived, policies devoted to local investment, job growth, and provision of consumer goods for the domestic market, particularly clothes. In the resultant Kenyan apparel geographies, export-oriented factories (currently 22 in 2007, from a high of 34 in 2004³) produce fashionably faded trousers⁴, trucked on individual hangers from enclaved processing zones to Kilindini port in Mombasa, on to New York or Los Angeles, and ultimately to US consumers. In ironic contrast, Kenyans, including those staffing the "sweatshops," sort through stalls of secondhand castoffs, imported in compressed 45 kg bales, and discarded by US (and EU) consumers.

In this chapter, I continue an initial tripartite presentation of international clothing systems in Kenya⁵ with a focus on export garment production. Together with genealogies

³ Current figures are fluctuating downward as factories closures continue in post-MFA Kenya (sources: EPZA and Republic of Kenya Statistical Abstracts 2006, 2007).

⁴ The top three garments produced in Kenya for export to the United States under AGOA include (in cotton) women and girl's slacks, men and boy's trousers, and women and girl's knit shirts, and (manmade fiber) men and boy's trousers (Table 2, below).

⁵ I continue this discussion of new garment imports in Chapter 6. In addition, while apparel has been and continues to be manufactured in micro and small enterprises throughout Kenya (see McCormick 1996,

of African print cloth, and the relatively recent histories of *mitumba* (Chapter 4), a focus on export apparel production provides further substantiation of Kenya's complicated, and at times contradictory, global engagements. Neoliberal shifts in Kenya underlie both the recent flow of imports (in *mitumba* and, increasingly, *leso* and new apparel sourced in Asia - see Chapter 6) and current export-oriented garment mobilizations. Given this context, I begin with Kenyan policy transformations from ISI to export-oriented manufacture, through the establishment of Manufacturing Under Bond (MUB) and passage of the Export Processing Zones Act. I continue with an assessment of garment manufacture under AGOA and the contraction of the apparel industry following the conclusion of the MFA. As a development strategy, AGOA is tenuous at best, and I explore this precariousness with respect to its structure and provisions, and the insecurity the act promotes. I am particularly critical of the evident "export" commodity fetish belying current industrial investment in Kenya, and the enclave geographies associated with its realization, and I explore this in reference to garment EPZs.

Compared to the limited scholarly attention given *leso* and *mitumba* in Kenya, export-oriented garment production has generated considerable research by those interested in its development potential (Ikiara 1995, Mireri 2000, McCormick et al. 2001, Mushita 2001, Ikiara and Ndirangu 2002, Gibbon 2003, RATES 2003, Morris 2006, Omolo 2006) and/or critical of its working conditions (Bahadur 2004, Kamungi and Ouma 2004, Hachey 2007). The material presented in this chapter includes a discussion of these sources, augmented by government publications, newspaper articles, trade data,

McCormick et al. 2001, McCormick and Kinyanjui 2003), and while research on this sector indicates the increasing "internationalization" of these producers (particularly with respect to Asian inputs sourced via Somali importers in Eastleigh, Nairobi), the trade is otherwise confined to Kenya (Wambugu 2002). I reference the production of these apparel MSEs only with respect to the four international systems of my focus.

and interviews with government officials, industry representatives, and EPZ garment factory owners and managers conducted in 2006⁶.

The majority of research on export apparel production in Kenya (and elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa – Gibbon 2002, 2003, 2004, Morris 2006) views its emergence and continuation through GCC and GVC frameworks, understanding that EPZs offer Kenya an opportunity for development provided the sector can appropriately upgrade (by way of increases in value added, and organizationally through specializations in both long runs of a narrow and basic product ranges and in functional activities) (Gibbon 2003:1810). While chain analyses offer insights into the reorganization of production systems and processes of territorial development (Smith et al. 2002), most analysts adopting these approaches remain generally pessimistic regarding the potentialities of “trading up” for Africa (Gibbon and Ponte 2005).

Agreements like AGOA contribute to a general shift in economic (and discursive) strategies emphasizing “trade not aid” and have thus found their advocates across the development spectrum, but particularly as the new development trope emanating from the

⁶ The following key informant interviews were conducted in this sector in 2006: Ministry of Trade and Industry (2 representatives), Kenya Association of Manufacturers – Textiles and Apparel Division (2 representatives), Export Processing Zones Authority - Athi River (2 representatives), and the owner and managers of 2 EPZ garment factories in Ruaraka (Nairobi) and Changamwe (Mombasa). In particular, I utilize extended commentary from Bandu Udalagama, Owner and General Manager of Upan Wasana EPZ Ltd. in Ruaraka, Nairobi. Udalagama, from Sri Lanka, is a veteran of the export apparel business both in his home country and Kenya. He was the first manager of the first export garment manufacturer, in the first Kenyan EPZ, the government-owned Athi River (in 1994). Having come from Tri-Star Apparels in Sri Lanka where he oversaw twenty-seven factories, he nevertheless remembers his first days in Kenya vividly: “I came on the 28th of July [1994]. On the 29th I walked into the godown on Athi River – there was nothing in the building. From 29th July to 17th September I was able to furnish the entire factory. On the 17th I got my machines in on one side. We start assembling with my team from Sri Lanka. On the 29th of September we started the plant with 240 workers and 380 machines we assembled. So it could be done. That was not done by Sri Lankans, but by Kenyans. Anything can be done.”

World Bank, IMF, and underlying the collapsed Doha “Development” Round⁷. As noted by Gibbon, “the wider significance of AGOA in relation to questions of economic development mainly concerns the extent to which trade concessions generate the same or more benefits as aid” (2003:1809). Lest advocates of outward processing herald the benefits of AGOA too readily, Gibbon goes on to caution that “the history of preferential trade agreements, particularly those between developed and developing countries, is a chequered one” (ibid.).

Importantly, EPZ-led development fosters particularly fractured geographies of “local” investment and global integration whereby archipelagos or enclaves of wealth and activity are dislocated from surrounding national spaces. EPZs have thus emerged in an atmosphere of changing discourses, practices, and spaces of development marked “by the relative waning of national projects of development and the emergent tendency (in their place) for bounded spaces and nodes and zones (Sidaway 2007:346). This reliance on a “patchwork of privately secured enclaves” risks becoming “not temporary irruptions, but long term features of the political [and economic and cultural] landscape (Ferguson 2006:208). Though speaking in terms of mineral-extracting industries in Angola and Nigeria, particularly, Ferguson’s assessment of “capital intensive enclaves that are substantially insulated from the local economy” (2006:35) offer a compelling parallel to EPZs. In this way EPZs in Kenya and elsewhere represent the discontinuous spatialities underlying the reputedly increasing integrations of globalization.

What these developments portend for Africa, and particularly Kenya, is uncertain. If globalization is understood less as a deepening worldwide integration and instead as a

⁷ See, for example, the WB/IMF publication “Doha Development Agenda and Aid for Trade” (2005) <http://www.imf.org/external/np/pp/eng/2005/091905.pdf>.

“form of point-to-point connectivity that bypasses and short-circuits all scales based on contiguity” (Ferguson 2006:42) should Kenya continue to privilege this model of development? Here the multiple geographies of textiles and clothing, and their historical and emergent networks in Kenya, suggest there may, in fact, be alternatives.

The Kenyan Postcolony

Through the colonial and postindependence periods, the Kenyan economy has remained overwhelmingly agricultural, with a reported 24.2% of GDP attributable to agriculture and forestry in 2005 (Economic Survey 2006:24). Kenya has nevertheless pursued industrialization, with particular emphases on textiles and clothing, as a means of employment creation, poverty reduction, rural development, potential opportunities for residents of arid and semi-arid lands (through cotton cultivation) and foreign exchange generation. Before turning specifically to the post-colonial textiles and clothing sector in Kenya, I offer the following outline of the two major economic trajectories following independence in 1963: import substitution industrialization (ISI), and export promotion associated with structural adjustment and implemented together with a broader portfolio of neoliberal directives.

Ikiara et al. (2004) offer a discussion of Kenya since independence framed by the political demarcations and associated policy prescriptives of its two longstanding presidencies: Jomo Kenyatta (1963-1978) and Daniel arap Moi (1978-2002). During the Kenyatta regime, “Kenyanisation⁸” and Import Substitution were pursued in tandem with

⁸ In 1967, over 50% of Kenya’s GDP generated by manufacturing was claimed by multinational corporations, a majority of which were based in Britain (Maxon 1992). These MNCs employed large cadres of expatriate managers and repatriated most of their earnings, prompting the Kenyatta government to

“generally impressive” results (ibid.). Policies effected under ISI included a combination of tariffs and import quotas supported by foreign exchange allocation measures (Omolo 2006: 148), while the ‘indigenisation’ emphases helped to establish a class of local entrepreneurs (Leys 1975). From 1963-1973, the government reported increases in manufacturing output from 9-10 percent per year, on average (ibid.). The apparent success of this period is attributed to a “cautious financial policy that ensured low inflation and manageable levels of external debt. There were deliberate efforts to keep budget deficits within manageable levels and to reduce the country’s dependence on aid.” (Ikiara et al. 2004). By the mid-1970s, however, facing a series of external shocks including successive oil crises. Fiscal discipline eroded following a coffee boom in the late 1970s, all of which was exacerbated by the collapse of the East African Union in 1977 (ibid.). Kenyatta’s presidency was nevertheless characterized by initial economic success and by a governing style which, while admittedly repressive and authoritarian, relied on a power structure less ethnically concentrated and in which decision making was relatively decentralized, in comparison to the subsequent Moi years (Leys 1975, Hazlewood 1979, Swainson 1980, Ochieng and Maxon 1992).

Moi’s presidency accelerated a consolidation of executive power, while sidelining the judiciary and parliament, contributing to an informed policy-making vacuum (Ikiara et al. 2004). Moi’s influence, while increasingly absolute, was nevertheless tempered by a shift in the emerging importance of multilateral and bilateral donor institutions, beginning with the implementation of World Bank and International Monetary Fund structural adjustment programs in Kenya in 1980 (Fahnbulleh 2006). By the end of the 1990s, the

establish specific policies to encourage and enable African ownership, thereby serving to contain profits within Kenya (ibid.).

role of the donor community had become “perhaps the most important force in Kenya’s policy formulation process” (Ikiara et al. 2004). Economic performance during Moi’s regime was similarly dire, most notably in the textiles and clothing sectors.

Textiles and Clothing after Independence

The “Directory of Industries 1986 Edition” by Kenya’s Central Bureau of Statistics indicates considerable growth in the number of textile and garment manufacturers, and the amount of people employed, following the colonial period through the 1970s. Included in the survey are knitting mills (19), makers of “made up textile goods except wearing apparel” (27), producers of “spinning, weaving, and finishing textiles” (19), and a staggering 240 manufacturers of “wearing apparel (except footwear)” (1988). “Year of establishment” data available for 214 of these 240 companies⁹ indicate that 172 firms were founded in the 1960s (74), 1970s (96), and early 1980s (2). Local cloth manufacturing (of all types), including those supplying the growing garment sector, expanded from six weaving mills in operation by 1963 to 52 weaving mills by 1983 (Republic of Kenya, 2001:3). The notable drop off in company creation in the 1980s (Fig. 10) signals emerging troubles in the textile and clothing industries, and mirrors a broader, deepening malaise throughout Kenya, after initial enthusiasms and economic investment following independence waned.

⁹ Of these 240 garment firms, 41 employed more than 100 workers, including Sunflag Textile and Knitwear Limited, with more than 500 hundred employees. The majority of firms surveyed employed from 20 to 99 individuals (1988). Of the 19 textile companies, whose numbers include the now-defunct *khanga* and *kikoi* manufacturers Mount Kenya Textiles Ltd. (founded in 1978), Rift Valley Textiles Limited (1975), Thika Cloth Mills (1960), Kisumu Cotton Mills Ltd. (1965), Sunflag Spinning Mills E.A. Ltd. (1964), and Kenya Textile Mills Ltd. (1965), seven firms employed from 500 to more than 1000 workers at the time of the survey in the early-1980s (Directory of Industries 1988)

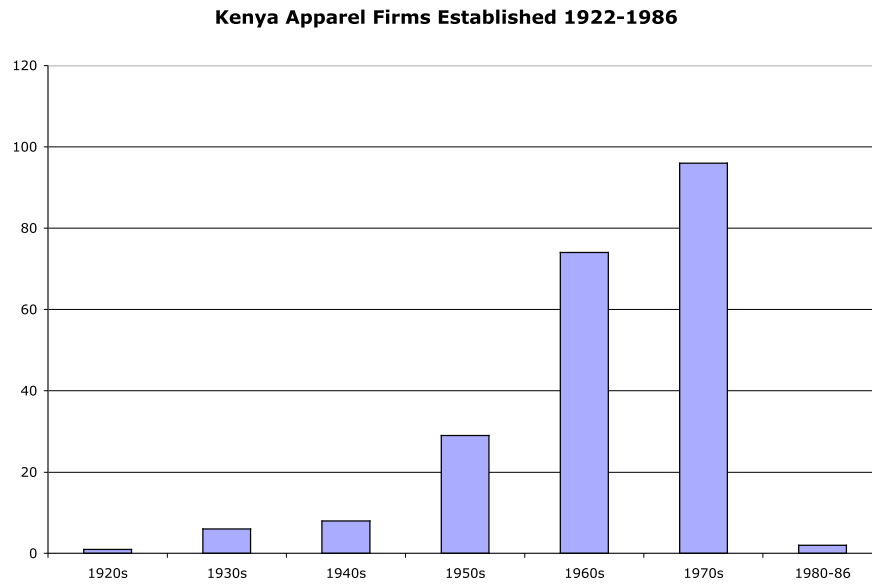


Fig. 10. Apparel Firms Established in Kenya, 1922-1986, by decade.
Source: Directory of Industries 1986 Edition (1988:77-103)

Under ISI, cloth and apparel manufacturing in Kenya was pursued as an aggressive means to industrialization, increased domestic control of the economy, and employment generation. In this period, the textile and apparel industry emerged as a leading manufacturing activity in Kenya, in terms of size and employment (engaging approximately 30% of the manufacturing sector's labor force) (Omolo 2006:148). Textiles and apparel production was classified as a "core industry" and provided official government protection, including rapid investment (evident, in part, by the increase in the number of engaged firms – Fig. 1) and the establishment of cooperative ginning societies to provide cotton lint. By virtue of these focused policies, cloth and clothing production became the second largest manufacturing activity after food processing (Republic of Kenya 2001, Ikiara and Ndirangu 2003, Kimani 2002, Omolo 2006). Under ISI, large donor support was further coupled with the expansion of land under cotton (by 180% from pre-independence) and processing capacity (by 60%) (Ikiara and Ndirangu 2003:3).

Vertically integrated facilities capable of yarn spinning, fabric manufacturing, and garment production were encouraged and established (ibid.:30).

Ultimately, textile and apparel production under the ISI policies of post-independence Kenya exhibited mixed results. On the one hand, growth and expansion in the initial years of the program were impressive (Ikiara et al. 2004). An emphasis on consumer goods, at the expense of capital and intermediate goods to support the industries (including machinery, particularly), served to undermine substitution policies as firms were forced, ironically, to import the inputs for production in an atmosphere of unfavorable terms of trade, exacerbated by the oil crisis of 1973. Likewise, the “inward looking” aspects of import substitution, often deemed unsustainable given small consumer demands in African domestic markets, were further reduced with the collapse of the East African Community in 1977, which effectively eliminated consumer markets in Tanzania and Uganda from Kenya’s purview (ibid.).

By the mid-1980s, the textile and garment industry began to show visible signs of impending collapse (Omolo 2006). In this atmosphere, characterized by an effective lack of a viable industrial policy (Coughlin and Ikiara 1988), Kenya’s Fourth Development Policy (1979-1984) advocated a more open strategy for the industrial sector, including cloth and clothing production, relying on market based incentives and fewer regulatory structures, coupled with the strengthening of export promotion schemes (Bienen 1990, Ikiara et al. 2004). Manufacturing Under Bond (MUB) was initiated from 1985-1990, together with export compensation schemes, import duty and VAT remission, and, in 1990, the passing of the Export Processing Zones Act (CAP 517 of the Laws of Kenya)

(Ikiara et al. 2004).¹⁰

Kenyan Clothing Production: “Inward” to “Outward” Processing

In post-colonial Kenya, a commitment to state intervention and development was expressed in the policies of Import Substitution Industrialization. Through ISI, Kenya, and many recently independent sub-Saharan African states, pursued a path to development predicated on industrialization coupled with employment creation through public and private investment (Ogonda 1992). Under the leadership of Jomo Kenyatta (1963-1978), this policy was understood to require state protection of nascent industries through a combination of tariffs (or, in the case of clothing, quantitative restrictions¹¹) to reduce imports and subsidies to promote domestic manufacture for the local market (de Valk 1996).

Import substitution was coupled with the promise of subsequent redistribution of the accompanying capital accumulation, making the policy more palatable to emerging local elites¹² in Kenya, who rejected calls for redistributive policies to more equitably allocate the legacies of colonial imbalance (Kaplinsky 1978). After independence, ISI offered Kenyans the promise of increased wealth, economic autonomy, and a means to circumvent extractive colonial-era trade in primary agricultural and mineral commodities.

For governments pursuing a two-fold strategy of stimulating industrial production and securing adequate markets for the consumer products produced, problems emerged

¹⁰ See also www.epzakenya.com/invopps.php?sub=50&cat=7.

¹¹ During the ISI period, imports of used clothing were prohibited, while new imported clothing was so restricted as to be unavailable (personal interviews, various, 2006).

¹² This class of nascent African entrepreneurs were themselves supported through Kenyatta-era policies of “Kenyanisation” (Kaplinsky 1978).

with ISI, as noted above. While textiles geared for the local market (particularly *khanga* and *kitenge*) had their fashionable proponents, domestic consumers (even East Africa-wide) were relatively few and appreciably diminishing (see Chapter 2). Local industries in Kenya and Tanzania producing similar products were pitted against one another in competition for a diminishing market. The collapse of the East African Community in 1977 led to further market contraction, lower productivity, and declining standards of living.

A poignant 1975 Sessional Paper “On Economic Prospects and Policies” summarized the increasingly difficult situation then facing Kenya. Despite a “successful first decade of growth (averaging 6.8% per annum) and relative prosperity since independence,” the Kenyan economy was perceptibly worsening and the government was preparing to ask its citizens for sacrifices. Laying out a plan to confront the declining economy, including modest steps toward export manufacturing, the author displayed a notable sensitivity:

It is difficult to explain the impact of these largely external events [price, commodity, and credit “squeezes”] on the lives and standard of living of our people. Kenya has enjoyed relatively stable prices and growing levels of economic activity ever since Independence and people are unaccustomed to the kinds of adjustments now before us. Their concerns are immediate and pressing-how to buy food in the face of higher prices; where to find work; where to get fertilizer and seed, and how to pay for them; how to get produce to market. (Republic of Kenya 1975:1)

Though Kenya did not effect a full reversal of ISI policies until the Structural Adjustment decade of the 1980s, a system of ten percent export subsidies on manufactured goods was implemented in November 1974 (1975:17).

By the mid-1980s, though Kenya’s manufacturing structure had moved beyond “early phase” ISI toward substantial industrial linkages and intermediate production of

capital goods, it was racked with conflicts. Battles emerged between producers and traders and producers and users of inputs (particularly cotton farmers and textile firms) (de Valk 1996:46). While by 1986, no clothing imports were (officially) recorded for Kenya (suggesting self-sufficiency), textile imports (used as inputs in the clothing industry) were substantially higher than textile exports, resulting in a negative trade balance in textiles and clothing combined (ibid.). For Kenyan consumers, clothing “made in Kenya” was increasingly expensive (personal interviews, various, 2006).

In the midst of looming economic crises precipitated in part by contracting gains from import substitution strategies, Kenya began an “austerity” program with the first World Bank structural adjustment loan signed in 1980, under duress. Structural adjustment policies served to move Kenya, abruptly, from regimes of state controls toward market orientation, liberalization of fiscal and monetary policies, and privatization. Much has been written of the effects of structural adjustment in Africa, and elsewhere, beginning in the 1980s through the mid-1990s (see Mkandawire and Soludo 1999 for studies of SAPs from an African perspective). Much of this writing on SAPs and their effects throughout sub-Saharan Africa has been justly critical. The upheavals and hardships generated by austere and arbitrary cuts to social services, including health care expenditure and education, were dramatic and problematic.

Apparel manufacturers increased rapidly under ISI in the 1960s and 1970s (with 74 and 96 new garment producers established in each decade, respectively). In the period of structural adjustment, new clothing firm creation declined precipitously¹³ (see Fig. 1, above). Privately owned textile mills and garment producers existed in Kenya prior to the

¹³ The 1986 Edition of the Directory of Industries, published by the Central Bureau of Statistics, indicates two apparel firms were established in the 1980s prior to the edition (one each in 1980 and 1981).

adoption of structural adjustment and were therefore spared the restructuring effects of privatization ushered in by SAPs. Of the public sector textile and apparel establishments privatized under SAPs, few survived the transition (McCormick et al. 2001). Among the ensuing economic hardships associated with the “austerity” of SAPs were the entrenchment of poverty and inequality, the expansion of the informal sector and the burgeoning of *mitumba*¹⁴ (McCormick et al. 2002, Kinyanjui and McCormick 2003).

By the mid 1980s, shifts from ISI toward liberalization in Kenya were pursued with progressive eliminations of regulatory structures, including a shift from quantitative restrictions to tariff rates on imports, changes in exchange rate policy, and the strengthening of export promotion schemes, followed by periodic re-impositions of quotas (Foroutan 1993). Proponents within the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, frustrated with a perceived lack of commitment to reforms in Kenya, cast liberalization as necessary for the expansion of manufacturing, by enabling producers to diversify through export abroad. Investment promotion, employment generation in labor-intensive industries, and foreign exchange generation were touted as among the expected benefits of economic liberalization. To further this agenda, the Manufacturing Under Bond (MUB)¹⁵ program was established to promote Kenyan export production in 1986.

¹⁴ The extent and severity of these combined economic crises were instrumental in ushering in a period of acceptance of secondhand clothing in East Africa (personal interviews 2006, various).

¹⁵ The MUB scheme is accorded most of the incentives of EPZs without the requirement of location at predetermined sites. Manufacturers are required to reimburse the Government of Kenya (GoK) all costs pertaining to customs officers and guards on site. Enterprises operating under this program are offered the following incentives: exemption from duty and VAT on imported plant, machinery, equipment, raw materials and other imported inputs and 100% investment allowance on plant, machinery, equipment and buildings. The Investment Promotion Center (IPC), a GoK parastatal tasked to encourage and promote investment in Kenya, processes all applications for MUB (UNCTAD <http://www.intracen.org/Appli2/Leather/AfricanPlatform/CountryProfile.aspx?info=Invest&countryid=19&countryname=Kenya&kk>, last accessed 30 July 2007).

From 1984-1994, the percentage of manufactured consumer goods (including textiles, apparel, and footwear) exported by Kenya rose from 3.8% to 13.7% of total exports (Republic of Kenya Economic Survey 1995). While the MUB program set the Kenyan context for this expansion, the establishment of global apparel quotas with the Multifiber Arrangement (MFA) in 1974 provided an external impetus for foreign direct investment in garment manufacture in Kenya. The Multifiber Agreement (or Multifiber Arrangement) was initiated in 1974 to regulate global trade in garments and textiles through the imposition of quotas on “developing” country exporters by “developed” country importers. Potentially large volume apparel producers, particularly China, were targeted under the MFA. Seeking alternatives and as a way of circumventing quotas, Chinese (particularly Taiwanese) capital invested in apparel production in countries without quotas. Nascent apparel industries in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and South Africa, particularly, expanded through this investment and production shift (see Pickles and Woods 1989, Hart 2002). While Kenyan export apparel production throughout the 1980s and 1990s was modest by comparison, MFA-imposed restrictions contributed to a convergence of MUB production and Asian investment to generate an emergent export garment focus. Subsequently in 1990, the EPZ Act¹⁶ (Cap 517, Laws of Kenya) was passed by parliament to further the establishment of outward processing industries, particularly apparel.

EPZs in Kenya

¹⁶ Export Processing Zones were a feature of the Export Development Program, a World Bank strategy to generate infrastructure creation and support market liberalization by boosting export-oriented manufacture. Kenya was required to pass the EPZ Act of 1990 as a condition for obtaining loans under the program (Morris 2006).

Export Processing Zones (also Free Trade Zones or Industrial Development Zones) have been a stalwart of development policies throughout the twentieth century¹⁷ in Latin America, Asia, and most recently, Africa (World Bank 1990, Bloom and Sachs 1998, Mireri 2000, Watson 2001). Manufacturers in export processing zones in Kenya are offered the following incentives and concessions:

- ten-year tax “holiday” or exemption, followed by a flat 25% tax for ten years
- exemption for the first ten years from all withholding taxes on dividends and other payments to non-residents during the first ten years
- exemption from import duties on raw materials and intermediate inputs
- no restrictions on management or technical arrangements;
- exemption from stamp duty and value-added tax
- 100% investment deduction over 20 years on initial investment
- guarantee against nationalization
- investment protection through MIGA (Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency)

(source: EPZA Kenya)

In addition, EPZ enterprises are offered exemption from the Industrial Registration Act, Factories Act, Statistics Act, Trade Licensing Act; and from pre-shipment inspection; while provided with on-site customs inspection; and work permits for senior expatriate staff (UNCTAD 2005 – *Investment Policy Review, Kenya*). Further, to promote investment within the EPZs, as with MUBs, a separate parastatal entity (Export Processing Zones Authority) was established to facilitate participation in EPZ manufacturing (Fig. 11).

¹⁷ While Shannon Free Zone in Ireland proudly proclaims itself the “world’s first duty-free zone,” established in 1958, <http://www.shannon-dev.ie/AboutUs/45YearsinAction/WorldsFirstDutyFreeZone/>, a long history of entrepôt or free ports in Asia and areas surrounding the Indian Ocean, including Zanzibar, provides an alternative precedent.



Fig. 11. Weekly EPZ advertisement, *Daily Nation*, Kenya, 2006.

There are currently 39 EPZs in Kenya (from a high of 43 in 2005), 37 of which are privately owned while two - Athi River in Machakos District, east of Nairobi, and Kipevu EPZ, Mombasa - are government owned¹⁸. The zones range from single-factory establishments (the majority of Kenyan EPZs) to multiple manufacturing enterprises. Spatially, the zones are concentrated in and around Nairobi, (including the Industrial Area and Ruaraka in the northwest of the city and Athi River, 30 km from Nairobi city center) and in Mombasa (specifically the Changamwe Industrial Area on the Kenyan mainland). Unlike MUB factories, which are not limited to a particular area under the scheme, production under EPZ authority must be located within a gazetted export-processing zone. Kenyan EPZ sectors include agro processing, chemicals, electronics,

¹⁸ The 339-hectare Athi River facility was gazetted in 1990 and constructed for an estimated thirty million USD, with 80% provided by a World Bank loan and the balance contributed by the Government of Kenya (EPZA 2007).

spinning, dartboards, printing, pharmaceuticals, plastics, service, and garments (EPZA 2005).

The garment industry comprises ninety percent (90%) of EPZ employment in Kenya, currently estimated at between 28,000 and 30,000¹⁹ workers, of whom an estimated 75% are women (Kamungi and Ouma 2004:8). Garment and textile (spinning) worker wages are the lowest among all EPZ manufacturers²⁰ and constitute the only sector in which wages were flat from 2002-2005 (EPZA 2005:21).

While EPZs in Kenya were established in 1990, production activities did not begin until 1993 (EPZA 2007). Throughout the 1990s, Kenya's EPZs struggled to create significant levels of investment and employment. The number of Export Processing Zones in Kenya has since risen from 10 in 1993 to 43 in 2005, dropping to 39 in 2006. The number of operating enterprises has similarly expanded from 12 in 1993 to 71 in 2006 (from 74 in 2004). The level of investment in the EPZ garment-manufacturing sector reportedly rose from 1.2 billion Ksh in 2000 (\$16 million USD) to 9.98 billion Ksh in 2005 (\$126 million USD) (EPZA 2005:15). Growth in employment and in exports mirrors these trends, with substantial increases in both after 2000 followed by declines beginning in 2005 (see Table 2 and Fig. 16, below). These substantial increases in both EPZ and export garment developments in Kenya are attributable to the significant impact of AGOA.

¹⁹ I have estimated these figures based on information provided by EPZ representatives in Kenya in 2006 and data available in the 2006 Kenya Statistical Abstract, less an estimated 2000 due to subsequent factory closures.

²⁰ The 2005 Annual EPZ report indicates an average monthly wage (for all sectors) of 6,608 Ksh (\$88 USD) whereas the accompanying graph indicates printing workers, by contrast, earn an average 47,000 Ksh (\$627 USD) per month.



Fig. 12. Sewing buttonholes for AGOA exports, EPZ, Ruaraka, Nairobi (April 2006).

AGOA in Kenya

Amid the global restructuring associated with trade liberalization, a number of “agreements” have emerged linking producers in North America (NAFTA²¹), Central America and the Dominican Republic (CAFTA-DR²²) and Africa (AGOA), with U.S. consumers. While a number of AGOA-eligible commodities are accepted within this agreement, apparel is among the highest volume and highest value items produced and traded with the U.S., constituting 97% of Kenyan exports²³ (Fig. 13). I turn now to the

²¹ North American Free Trade Agreement (January 1994).

²² Central American and Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (July 2005).

²³ Items covered by AGOA include agricultural products (in particular food items, with over 600 tariff lines), minerals and manufacturing (more than 700 tariff lines), and apparel and footwear (approximately 500 tariff lines). In Kenya, as in all but the oil-producing AGOA beneficiaries, clothing is by far the largest item exported to the United States. Apparel constituted 97% of AGOA exports from Kenya to the US in 2006 (<http://www.agoa.info/popup/trade.php?country=ke>). As for Kenya, within CAFTA-DR, apparel is “the most valuable import category” (Malaga 2006).

African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and the changes effected by AGOA in the garment sector in Kenya.

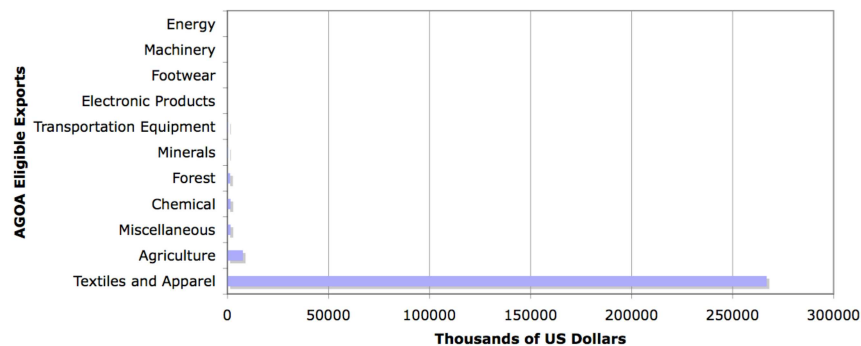


Fig. 13. Kenya exports to US under AGOA, by value (USD)
Source: AGOA

AGOA was first passed by the U.S. Congress in May 2000 and recently amended in December 2006.²⁴ Under its provisions, AGOA eliminates duties and quotas on apparel and certain textiles exported to the United States by (currently 38) Sub-Saharan African signatories. AGOA beneficiaries must meet a series of political and economic conditionalities for inclusion within the agreement. These provisions are broadly defined to permit those countries “that work to open their economies and build free markets” to participate under AGOA (AGOA 2004). Further distinctions demarcate Lesser

²⁴ George W. Bush signed The African Investment Incentive Act of 2006, or AGOA IV, on December 20, 2006. As the number suggests, this latest installment is the third amendment to the original AGOA. AGOA IV “provides duty free and quota free treatment for eligible apparel articles made in qualifying Sub-Saharan African countries through 2015. Qualifying articles include: 1) apparel made of U.S. yarns or fabric; 2) apparel made of Sub-Saharan (regional) yarns and fabric, subject to a cap until 2015; 3) Apparel made in a designated lesser developed country of third-country yarns and fabrics, subject to a cap until 2012; 4) Apparel made of yarns and fabrics not produced in commercial quantities in the United States; 5) Certain cashmere and merino wool sweaters; 6) Eligible hand loomed, handmade, or folklore articles and ethnic printed fabrics; and 7) Textiles and textile articles produced entirely in a lesser-developed beneficiary country (http://www.agoa.gov/eligibility/apparel_eligibility.html).

Developed Countries (LDCs)²⁵ and non-LDCs. In this framework, LDCs are permitted to utilize third-country fabrics in apparel production for export to the US, a key component enabling current garment manufacture throughout sub-Saharan Africa²⁶.

AGOA is credited with a resurgence and revitalization of investor interest in garments in Kenya following a period of decline and deindustrialization (Omolo 2006). Indeed, as Fig. 14 indicates, the export apparel trade to the EU, in comparison to the United States, is minimal.

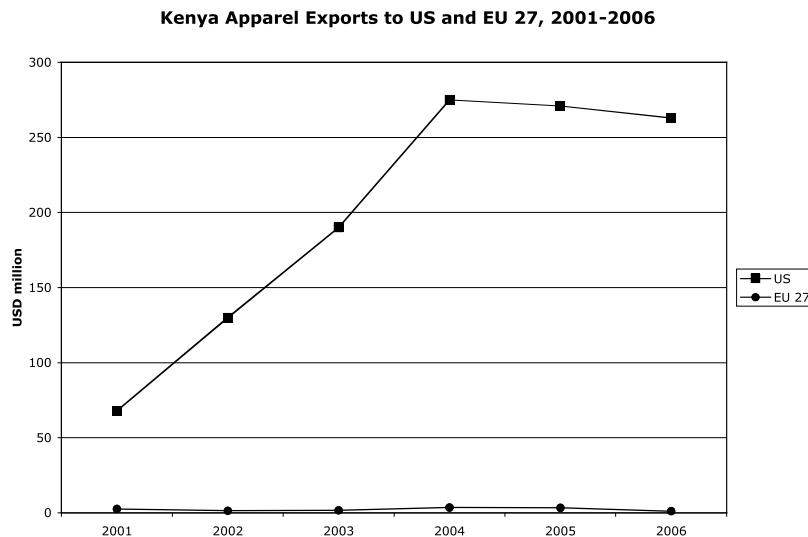


Fig. 14. Kenya Apparel Exports to US and EU 27, 2001-2006
Source: OTEXA and Comext.

AGOA supporters tout the benefits of investment and employment creation throughout sub-Saharan Africa. It is, arguably, “the most far-reaching initiative in both

²⁵ LDCs are defined as those countries with a per capita GNP of less than \$1500 year in 1998 as measured by the World Bank. While many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa meet this designation, South Africa and Mauritius are important exceptions.

²⁶ Kenya is currently estimated to require 225 million square meters of fabric for apparel production. Prior to the decline of the textile industry in the 1990s, there were 52 textile mills producing fabric and yarn with an installed capacity of 115 million SME. With a fifty percent decline in the number of textile mills in Kenya, coupled with reduced cotton production, Kenya’s current fabric demands greatly outstrip current supply (Republic of Kenya 2001, Kimani 2002, RATES 2003, Omolo 2006).

the history of US-African economic relations, and more generally in relation to the claim that concessions in the area of trade provide better long-term prospects for developing countries' economic development than do ones in aid" (Gibbon 2003:1809). Detractors, while not denying the creation of tens of thousands of export apparel jobs under AGOA, nevertheless question its sustainability, its meaningful contributions to Kenya's economy (aside from the low wages paid its employees), and the downward pressure placed on Kenyan workers (Kamungi and Ouma 2004).

There are currently 22 garment factories operating within the EPZs in Kenya, down from a high of 34 prior to the MFA phase-out (Table 1). EPZ garment production in Kenya follows a "cut, make, trim" model (CMT²⁷), using fabric (and other inputs) sourced in Asia. The relative ease of operation of this system is welcomed by apparel producers in Kenya, as described by one factory owner:

Design is done by the importer, the buyer. Wal-Mart & Target – they don't bother with design. Various importers have their designs. They'll announce one day and call everyone. The order is given to the buyer, the importer, everything is organized by them. Then they identify particular manufacturers, sketch forms, sometimes send samples. We all nominate our suppliers. I can source my own fabric, but I don't do that. I take from the nominated supplier of the importer. This way, if there is a problem – a flaw in the whole thing – it's their problem! I had a fabric problem once, and then I was able to say, 'Sorry – it's not my fault - return 30,000 yards for me.' This way, they pay...for all my production delays, the labor, they all pay. So sourcing – depends on the buyer, on the order...it's not my fancy. But when it comes to accessories, buttons, this goes to the nominated supplier. Hangers – goes to nominated supplier. Labor - all nominated suppliers. It's all organized now – it's easy to do production because all these things are taken care of. And now with email you get everything confirmed, with colors, design. I don't say that it's difficult, once you organize yourself. (Udalagama, personal interview, 26 April 2006, Nairobi)

²⁷ In Kenya, the process of CMT refers to fabric that is cut, made up, and then trimmed. In this practice, all trims (buttons, zippers, product care tags, bar codes) are added and loose threads are cut and removed from the garment. In this way, clothing is finalized for sale and is, from some manufacturers, shipped on the hanger for immediate display (Udalagama, personal interview, 26 April 2006, Nairobi).

Year	Number of Kenyan EPZ Garment Factories	Total Number of Employees
2000	6	6,487
2001	17	12,002
2002	30	25,288
2003	34	32,095
2004	34	-
2005	-	-
2006	24	30,800
2007	22	27-30,000

Table 2. Kenya EPZ apparel factories and employment (2000-2006)
Source: EPZA and Republic of Kenya Statistical Abstract 2006.

Apparel manufacture under AGOA in Kenya is done for one or more of several U.S. based firms, primarily: Wal-Mart, Target, PVH, JC Penney, JAG, Cherokee, Steve and Barry's, and Levi Strauss (Opiyo, personal interview, 4 March 2006, Nairobi, Chesang, personal interview, 11 March 2006, Nairobi) (Fig. 15). A number of EPZ manufacturers (and more commonly, MUB producers) also subcontract to other garment factories. JAR Kenya in Ruaraka EPZ, Nairobi, as a U.S. owned-subsidiary of Jordache International, frequently subcontracts other firms to complete orders (Udalagama, personal interview, 26 April 2006, Nairobi and Kamungi and Ouma 2004).



Fig. 15. Wal-Mart, women's slacks, Ruaraka EPZ, Nairobi (April 2006).

Kenyan garment production for the U.S. market is concentrated in two garment categories: women and girl's slacks, etc. (category 348²⁸) and cotton men and boy's trousers (category 347) (Appendix 1). Taken together in 2006, these two categories accounted for over 60% of Kenyan apparel exports to the U.S. (OTEXA). Cotton garments similarly accounted for the majority of Kenyan apparel to the U.S., or 77% in 2006 (ibid.). While Kenyan cotton production²⁹ once supplied the domestic garment

²⁸ The figures "347" and "348" refer to the garment classifications used in the U.S. textile and apparel category system. This three-digit system, correlated on the OTEXA website to 10-digit Harmonized Tariff Schedule Codes used more commonly in the EU and sub-Saharan Africa, are grouped as follows: 200 (cotton and or manmade fiber), 300 (cotton), 400 (wool), 600 (manmade fiber), 800 (silk blends/non cotton vegetable fiber) (OTEXA).

²⁹ Cotton in Kenya is grown by small farmers and is confined, predominantly, to arid and semi-arid areas. Currently, the EPZA estimates that Kenya has 140,000 small-scale cotton farmers, down from over 200,000 in the early 1980s when the industry was at its peak (EPZA 2005). As of 2003, 25,000 hectares were under cotton with a total lint production of 20,000 bales (ibid.). There were 24 ginneries in Kenya in 2005 with an estimated installed capacity of 140,000 bales, thus actual output is considerably less than the industry potential. At these rates, Kenya's present ginneries could process cotton were production increased by as much as 600% (Omolo 2006, see also RATES 2003).

industry, and cotton apparel continues to dominate Kenyan manufacturing, local capacities have contracted sharply since the 1980s and the abandonment of ISI.

Clothing styles in the visited EPZ factories reflect current U.S. fashion trends for “acid” and other chemical treatments to generate worn, ragged, and “artfully” faded garments. This finishing work is done primarily by men, working with minimal safety equipment (Kamungi and Ouma 2004). When I asked to see the area in which trousers were being treated at one EPZ, I was told by the accompanying manager not to get too close (i.e., I was permitted to view from a distance outside the building but forbidden from entering the work area, given the dangers). The men working inside, meanwhile, were unmasked and otherwise unprotected from the hazards³⁰.

AGOA, Apparel and Kenyan Development

Despite AGOA gains (see Fig. 16), the amount of investment and concessions offered by the Kenyan government through the EPZ program for garment export to the U.S., together with the suspension of various oversight mechanisms (including labor protections), have yielded considerable hostility from Kenyans and critics abroad. Particularly at issue is the perceived lack of sustainability, owing to the overwhelmingly moribund domestic textiles sector, and the grievous conditions facing labor, which are in turn exacerbated by the precariousness of the industry. The nascent resurgence of the garment sector in Kenya is thus undermined by both global reconfigurations in apparel following the end of the MFA and the precariousness embedded in the AGOA agreement.

³⁰ Human rights issues associated with fair and safe labor practices are a continual point of contention with respect to EPZs in Kenya. Issues surrounding garment EPZ work conditions, labor unrest, and the increasing unionization efforts by workers are critical components to understanding EPZ practices but are beyond the scope of this project. For recent related research in Kenya see Bahadur 2004, Kamungi and Ouma 2004, and Hachey 2007.

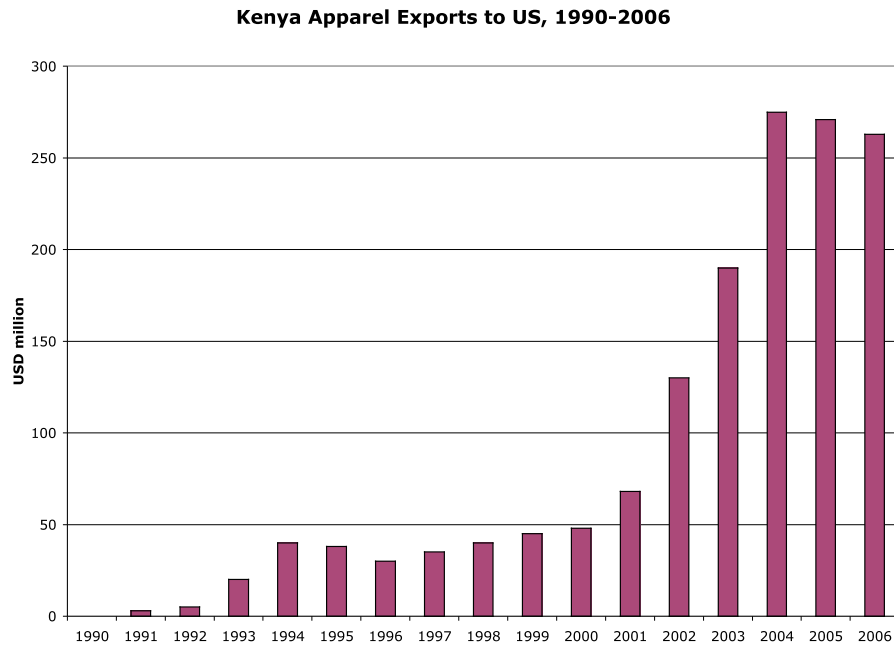


Figure 16. Kenya Apparel Exports to US (1990-2006).
Source: Kenya Revenue Authority 2005 and OTEXA.

The continuing allowance of third-country fabrics in the export garment sector, despite the “rules of origin” provision of AGOA, sustains the continuation of EPZ garment manufacture in Kenya. The issues surrounding the continual need for rule extension, and the seemingly insurmountable difficulties in creating the “backward linkages” to a full capacity textile sector, highlight the problematic structure of AGOA, the mobility of EPZ apparel investors, and the tenuous gains of “beneficiaries.”

Most sub-Saharan African countries rely on imports of Asian cloth for apparel production in the absence of an adequate domestic textile supply (Gibbon 2003, Kelley 2003, Morris 2006). The standard “yarn forward” rule of origin in AGOA, whereby spinning, knitting/weaving, and assembly must be carried out in the exporting country or

another beneficiary country (Gibbon and Ponte 2005:71), has twice been temporarily suspended by the U.S. Congress, enabling sub-Saharan African beneficiaries to continue to source fabric from Asia. Congress approved the most recent (five-year) extension of this “rule of origin” suspension in December 2006 (AGOA IV). AGOA IV therefore permits “Lesser Developed AGOA countries” to continue to import fabric and yarn for apparel production from Asia and maintain duty and quota free status to the U.S. through 2012.

The repeated uncertainty regarding continued suspension of rules of origin, and the relative powerlessness of Africans to effect change in this system, is of crucial concern for the viability of AGOA production. The rules of origin requirements are further perceived by interviewees in EPZ manufacturing and administration as contributing to potential investor reluctance (Opiyo, personal interview, 4 March 2006, Nairobi; Chesang, personal interview, 11 March 2006, Nairobi). The stress of uncertainty was noted in interviews conducted with EPZ authorities, representatives from the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Kenya Association of Manufacturer representatives, and factory owners/managers. Minister of Trade Mukhisa Kituyi³¹ was a frequent visitor to the U.S. throughout 2006 lobbying Congress as head AGOA delegate for sub-Saharan Africa and receiving full media coverage upon each return (Kathuri 2006). According to one pessimistic interviewee, without the continued suspension of “rules of origin” requirements, 2007 was certain to bring the end of the industry: “Starting from 2007, May, you will see most of these factories will close up and go. They don’t have fabric

³¹ China withdrew its objections to AGOA (submitted to the WTO in May 2006) within one month following negotiations by Kituyi (Kathuri 2006). Upon his return to Kenya in late July 2007 from the annual AGOA meeting (held in Accra, Ghana), Kituyi further established his reputation by announcing the next Africa-based AGOA meeting would be held in Kenya in 2009 (annual AGOA meetings alternate each year between Africa and the United States) (Oyuke 2007).

services in this part of the world - only one South African fabric and it's too expensive. This is it. You're seeing the end." (Bedi, personal interview, 19 March 2006, Nairobi).

How the integration of clothing into the WTO on January 1, 2005 will continue to affect the nascent textile-for-export concerns in Kenya and throughout sub-Saharan Africa in the long-term remains to be seen, although recent patterns are ominous. The extension of AGOA to 2015 may mitigate some of the immediate detrimental effects of direct competition with the low-wage and low-cost cloth- and clothing-manufacturing sector in Asia. Nevertheless, the factory closures anticipated by the conclusion of the MFA have contributed to the reduction of apparel manufacturers from 34 to the current 22 (Table 2, above), reversing the few years of AGOA gains – a devastation Kenyans refer to as the “Chinese tsunami” (Mulama 2005). By May 1, 2005 – International Labor Day and four months beyond the end of the MFA – Kenya had lost 6,000 jobs in apparel-for-export manufacturing with the closure of four major, well established, factories (ibid.). As the ten-year “tax holidays” offered by Kenya’s EPZs begin to conclude for some earlier manufacturers, there is the further threat of closure as producers shift their establishment to capitalize on concessions offered by neighboring Uganda³² and Tanzania.

One possible impact of the MFA conclusion is the potential for decreased investment by Asian firms in African manufacturing. China, in particular, as well as India, established offshore production facilities throughout sub-Saharan Africa as a way of circumventing country-based quota restrictions placed on garments under the MFA

³² This occurred with the departure from Kenya of Tri-Star Apparel, a Sri Lankan firm established that was the among the first to set up garment production in the Athi River EPZ in 1994. In 2004, at the conclusion of its tax holiday, the firm moved to Uganda. It has since ceased operations (Udalagama, personal interview, 26 April 2006, Nairobi).

(see Pickles and Woods 1989 and Hart 2002 for discussions of Taiwanese garment investment in South Africa). With the end of the MFA, Africa may prove less attractive to Chinese textile investors, in particular, given that the cost of producing apparel (including such variables as raw material inputs, electricity, and worker wages) is higher throughout sub-Saharan Africa than in China (Kamungi and Ouma 2004). Contrary to this speculation, however, investment by China in sub-Saharan Africa, including Kenya, is increasing as China's economic and political clout rises (Otieno 2005). I will return to the contradictory role of China in Kenyan development in Chapter 7.

Despite evidence to the contrary, Export Processing Zones and AGOA are presented ultimately as the new tandem foundation from which Kenyan development will rise. Critics of AGOA, in particular, have noted a perceived disingenuousness of a unilateral trade act legislated by the US with the stated goal of offering “tangible incentives for African countries to continue their efforts to open their economies and build free markets”³³. AGOA is heralded, on the one hand, as an unprecedented means of poverty alleviation in Sub-Saharan Africa by stimulating investment and trade rather than aid (see Gibbon 2003). By contrast, critics argue that U.S. corporations and foreign investors, and not those comparatively few sub-Saharan Africans being paid the low wages of garment work, remain the real beneficiaries of AGOA (Kamungi and Ouma 2004).

The comparative lack of domestic economic and social integration is among the more problematic aspects of the outward processing model of development pursued by Kenya. Restrictions ensuring duty-free sourcing for inputs on commodities subsequently

³³ www.agoa.gov

exported, render trade to domestic consumers untenable to garment producers. EPZ firms are allowed to sell up to twenty percent of their output on the domestic market, however they are then liable for all taxes on products sold domestically plus a 2.5 percent penalty.³⁴ Udalagama reports this penalty as averaging 200 Ksh (\$ 2.66 USD) per garment passing from the secured confines of an EPZ, into the surrounding domestic market (personal interview, 26 April 2006, Nairobi). Penalties apply not only to garments sold to domestic consumers but include charitable donations of seconds, extras, or rejects, 200 Ksh on each garment! Even if I give to charity I have to pay that. Sometimes, fabric - the cut pieces - we sell by the kilo. The buyer has to go to customs, pay, show them a certificate. Fabric I can't sell, these are imported duty-free fabrics!... I have a container there - full of thread. Thread which has been used and is not extra. I can't use it. I can't redye it. I will take it down there and burn it...I know KRA [Kenya Revenue Authority] are trying to come up with a scheme for charitable donations. Unfortunately, it's been the last twelve years...With my own factory, if I want to donate something lying around, rotting, I can't do that. I have to burn it. This is what I say - the Ministry [of Trade and Industry] talks - they don't get down to business. It's very simple. A paper has to be put up. Go to the parliament. It's enacted. It's not a big deal. Only a one-hour job. (Udalagama, personal interview, 26 April 2006, Nairobi)

While fabric for EPZ apparel in Kenya is sourced from Asia, nearly all inputs utilized by the industry are, in fact, imported - machinery and equipment, managers, hangers, "findings and trimmings" - buttons, zippers, etc. Udalagama continues, I purchase almost nothing locally. Poly bags and [cardboard] cartons, mainly. I have been buying thread 100% locally from Fine Spinners but the quality...Regata Coates thread in Egypt is so much better. Coates quality is so much better I have stopped buying here in Kenya.

Though legal integration is at a minimum, the garments themselves nevertheless appear on the pavements of Nairobi and Mombasa. This *mia* [100] trade, where everything costs 100 Ksh (\$1.33 USD), is a favorite of bargain shoppers, with fashionable Kenyans sharing tips as to where best to locate the hawkers and bragging as

³⁴ www.epzakenya.com

to the deals found (personal interviews, various). A prominent corner in Mombasa, on most late afternoons and late mornings on Sundays, was fertile ground for contraband EPZ bargains. A hawker³⁵ would appear with one or several cardboard boxes. A crowd would descend amidst shouts of “Mia! Mia! Mia!” and within minutes the only remnants were a few poly bags swirling in the wind³⁶.

With the exception of these few transgressions, and despite the passage of thousands of laborers through factory gates for each shift, local integration is otherwise minimal. As one garment worker noted, “The EPZs bring nothing to Kenya, we only get our salaries” (quoted in Hachey 2007:24). Given the development contributions EPZs are touted to deliver in Kenya, this assessment is particularly damning. Rather than integrated opportunities, EPZs dot the Kenyan landscape as fortified enclosures, linked more closely, via slender arteries of rail, road, and shipping lanes, to Wal-Mart shoppers in the U.S. rather than Kenyan citizens passing en route to home, or school, or *mitumba* market. With 4.5% local ownership, EPZs conjure the late colonial period of expatriate multinationals repatriating manufacturing earnings abroad, prompting postcolonial strategies of “indigenisation” to encourage Kenyan investors to produce clothing for the domestic market. Then, as now, development is the goal and apparel is perceived as the answer.

³⁵ My attempts to interview these sellers were unsuccessful.

³⁶ In this way I purchased a pair of new “Arizona” brand toddler trousers, size 2T, wrapped in clear plastic, affixed with a \$19.99 JCPenney price tag, and an inner label “Made in Kenya.” The cost – *mia*.

WHO CONTROLS INDUSTRY IN KENYA?³⁷

Gibbon's work on clothing manufacture in South Africa and Mauritius indicates that the supply response by African nations to the provisions offered by AGOA have been "substantially and reasonably broad in geographical terms" (Gibbon 2003:1821), but, on closer investigation, more narrowly confined to certain types of industrial enterprise, particularly CMT. This description accurately captures the Kenyan model. Likewise, firm ownership throughout sub-Saharan Africa suggests a similar pattern convergence. Ownership of an EPZ manufacturing facility may be "100% foreign-owned, 100% Kenyan owned, or any combination of foreign/Kenyan ownership" and recently 14% of all EPZ facilities were wholly Kenyan-owned (EPZA 2005). In practice, however, only one current garment EPZ is controlled by (partial) Kenyan ownership³⁸ (ibid., Kamungi and Ouma 2004, Hachey 2007). Of the current 21 EPZ garment manufacturers, 17 are funded by Asian investment, one by U.S. investors, and three are unknown (Table 3).

	Company	Location	Ownership
1	Alltex EPZ Ltd	Athi River	55% Kenya/45% Qatar
2	Apex Apparels Ltd	Nairobi/Ruaraka	100% India
3	Ashton Apparels EPZ Ltd	Mombasa	100% India
4	Baraka Apparel EPZ (K) Ltd	Nairobi/Ruaraka	100% Bahrain
5	Birch Investments EPZ Ltd	Mombasa	100% Hong Kong
6	Blue Bird Garments (K) Ltd	Mombasa	100% India
7	Emke Garments Kenya Ltd	Mombasa	100% India

³⁷ The straightforward title of a 1968 Nairobi publication. As asked on the back cover, in bold black and white script: "Do you know who are Kenya's top 50 company directors? Do you know who owns what in Kenya? Do you know where Kenya's business firms get their finance from?" I think it's time for a sequel. I thank John Pickles for bringing the book to my attention (and entrusting me with his copy throughout this dissertation.)

³⁸ Alltex EPZ Ltd. in Athi River is 55% Kenya and 45% Qatar-owned.

8	Global Apparels (K) EPZ	Athi River	100% India
9	JAR Kenya EPZ Ltd	Nairobi/Ruaraka	100% USA
10	Kapric Apparels EPZ Ltd	Mombasa	100% Hong Kong
11	Kenya Knit Garments EPZ	Mombasa	100% Taiwan
12	Leena Apparel Ltd	Mombasa	Unknown
13	Mega Garments Industries	Mombasa	100% India
14	Mirage Fashion Wear EPZ	Athi River	100% India
15	Protex (K) EPZ	Athi River	60% Taiwan/40% Sri Lanka
16	Rolex Garments EPZ	Athi River	100% India
17	Senior Best Garments	Mombasa	100% Taiwan
18	Shin Ace Garments	Mombasa	Unknown
19	Sin Lane K EPZ	Mombasa	100% Taiwan
20	Sino Link EPZ Ltd	Mombasa	100% China
21	United Aryan	Nairobi/Ruaraka	Unknown
22	Upan Wasana	Nairobi/Ruaraka	100% Sri Lanka

Table 3. Kenya EPZ garment factories (as of July 2007)
Source: Kamungi and Ouma 2004, EPZA 2007

While a history of East Asian-investment in apparel throughout sub-Saharan Africa is linked to MFA quotas from the 1970s and 1980s (Pickles and Woods 1989, Hart 2002), or, as in Tanzania, to ideological similarities promoting Chinese manufacturing investment in the 1960s and 1970s³⁹, Kenyan investment is primarily Indian and/or Sri Lankan. Given the deeply implicated histories of South Asians in Kenya, and elsewhere in East Africa, attention must be paid to their role in establishing and indeed expanding textile production under the current AGOA regime. The importance of the business and social links within the Asian-Kenyan community, and the role they continue to play in manufacturing investment, is suggested by Udalagama, in describing his arrival in Kenya:

³⁹ By the time of the Arusha Declaration in 1967, in which Tanzania's goals of socialism and self-reliance were formally enunciated, investment from the People's Republic of China resulted in the founding of the URAFIKI (Friendship) textile parastatal in Dar es Salaam in 1966 for the manufacture of local cloth including *khanga* and *kitenge* (or wax prints). This factory remains one of the few in operation today for the production of local cloth for the domestic East African market. A second and still extant *khanga* company opened in Mwanza in 1966 with French backing - MWATEX (Jones 1981).

Upan Wasana (EPZ) is only in Kenya. I'm here in this country from the last 12 years – 1994. I'm from Sri Lanka, I'm a Sri Lankan. I came here with a Sri Lankan party, partnering with a Kenyan organization called Chandarias. You know Chandarias? The number one Asian company here in Kenya! Manu Chandaria, of course, he's very famous. They wanted to go into labor-intensive programs, they chose garments because they owned almost ninety percent of a *khangas* factory. These *khangas* had a local representative in Sri Lanka. And this representative had two partners, one was the number one garment manufacturer in Sri Lanka called Tri-Star Apparels, right, with Kumathi Apura (KA). Apura and Chandarias got together and I was a personal friend of Apura...KA wanted me to start this in Nairobi. I had been looking after twenty-seven factories in Sri Lanka...I fell in love with Chandarias...And I fell in love with this place [Kenya]...I could boast and say that I brought five [Sri Lankan] investors after AGOA, but today I have only two of them, now only two remain. And even the two people that remain, they are on the fence. One is already going to establish himself in Ghana. He has said – Bandu, let's go - you pulled me to Kenya, let me pull you to Ghana. Support for garments is excellent in Ghana, they're trying to do a lot of things. But [now] my roots are here [Kenya]. If I finish here, I'd rather go back home.

Udalagama enjoyed the initial support of leading Asian Kenyans in establishing a foothold in East Africa. His experience emphasizes the depth of social networks within the Asian business community and the particular ways in which these relationships continue to structure investment and mobility (Dicken et al. 2001). Udalagama has found his new “home,” and his commitment to Kenya stems, in part, from being tethered to the capital investments he has made in the structures, machinery, even landscaping, as sole owner. Unlike the “typical gypsy-type factory” (personal interview), Bandu wondered what he would do if and when the business could no longer be “sustained,” “I don't know how I will close. I can't roll all of this up into a container. This property is mine.” But he questions his wisdom regularly,

The cost of doing business is very high in Kenya compared to 2000 when we started out with AGOA. Labor has gone up. Electricity has gone up. Productivity has come down. Problems are many, everything. Now if I can take me, I have my own water, I have my own borehole. I don't have a single drop of water from the City Council coming into this place... Power I have a 1000 KBA 3 generators running, any given day, any given time, they are operational. There are power cuts - unannounced power cuts, sometimes they go for hours and hours for a day, so the generators run. Then again when you go to labor, the Labor Department has not come into this factory. Only once in the past five years have

they come into the factory and then only on the day of riots in 2003. So this type of negativeness from the state makes people run away from this country. But productivity is excellent...We work a nine-hour day for five days, instead of five and a half days. Saturday is overtime. The average wage we pay is more than \$100 [U.S.] dollars, compared to other factories [that pay] \$60 [USD]. 7200 Ksh minimum – guaranteed. In Sri Lanka the wage is only \$45, but there cost of living is much more cheaper than this, only 500 rupees a month. Kenya is very expensive. I'm giving them [employees] something positive here but it's difficult. The cost of living is so high. Bread costs money. *Ugali* [cornmeal porridge] costs money. *Mitumba* costs money...but you can buy a fantastic garment for 200 Ksh. (personal interview, 26 April 2006, Nairobi)

Udalagama's articulations - of EPZs and *mitumba* – within a broader narrative of the everyday lives of Kenyans, offers an ironic moment of the myriad ways in which clothing and cultural economies are intertwined in the imaginaries of a garment magnate. While toiling to produce clothing destined for the U.S. market and priced accordingly – the final price tags are affixed before the garments are packed and shipped – EPZ laborers are themselves dressed, often sharply, in *mitumba*. Udalagama may extol the virtues of secondhand but he is among the few in Nairobi who do not buy from pavement stalls and city markets in the hopes of finding a flattering, affordable, and reasonably fresh garment. I continue a discussion of *mitumba* and of the complicated crosscurrents of African print cloth and export oriented garment production together with secondhand clothing in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4:

The political economies of textiles and apparel in Kenya, pt. 3: *mitumba*

The textile and apparel-manufacturing sector has been a centerpiece of economic development strategies in independent Kenya (Republic of Kenya 2001, 2003, Kimani 2002, Omolo 2006). Following colonial era policies emphasizing home textile industry protection (in the U.K.) and provisions to secure the agricultural and other holdings of white settlers in Kenya (Berman 1999), import substitution industrialization (ISI) strategies combined with “Kenyanisation” policies enacted immediately after independence, provided a short term boon to both cotton-growers and local textile and apparel manufacturers (Ikiara et al. 2004). These domestically oriented protections, foremost of which was the imposition of a 100% duty on imported goods (Omolo 2006), offered the emergent manufacturing sector an artificially buffeted zone from which to increase local investment in production, attract foreign investors willing to support ISI, and provide jobs and consumer goods to Kenyans eager to embrace the promise of independence and African self-determination. By the early 1980s, the textile industry was Kenya’s leading manufacturing sector in terms of both employment and size, involving over 200,000 households and 30% of the manufacturing labor force (EPZ 2005). Beginning in the early 1990s, however, textiles and apparel industries in Kenya have

been marked by precipitous declines in production volume, employment generation, and revenue realization (McCormick et al. 2002, Gibbon 2003, Omolo 2006).

In this chapter, I conclude an initial tripartite presentation of international clothing systems in Kenya with a focus on *mitumba*. With the liberalization of the Kenyan economy beginning in the early 1990s, government clothing “policies” have largely consisted of a series of acts, agreements and investments geared toward the outward processing of apparel and, concurrently, the importation and widespread adoption of previously banned secondhand clothing, or *mitumba*, for Kenyan consumers. Beginning with a discussion of the volume, value, and circuits of the global *mitumba* trade as it intersects with Kenya, I then turn to focus on two of Kenya’s numerous market sites – Gikomba and Sunbeam. I incorporate an extended narrative with a key informant in Nairobi’s *mitumba* trade to highlight the interconnectivities of Kenya and Tanzania, the foundation’s of *mitumba* in persistent inequalities, and the ethnic basis of its local organization.

Focusing on articulations of these international systems, I turn to a consideration of their intersections. Here I argue for a view of clothing systems in Kenya as mutually constitutive. An integrative assessment of clothing in Kenya highlights possibilities for local/regional integration elided by normative views of global apparel as Western (and particularly U.S.) based. A further development of this focus is offered in subsequent chapters, emphasizing the corporeal appropriations of clothing in Kenya and their bases in local and regional identities (Chapter 5) and the recent rise in Asian clothing imports (Chapter 6), concluding with an assessment of the changing South-South geographies informed by integrative approaches to cloth and clothing in Kenya.

Global Commodity Chain (GCC) and Global Value Chain (GVC) analyses offer arguably the most common entrée into textile and clothing research through well-established and analytically “coherent” conceptions of the spatiality and links of commodity exchange (Gereffi 1994, Gereffi and Korzeniewicz 1994, Sturgeon 2001). Vertical commodity chain analyses draw their power from a linear conceptualization of exchange as a series of chronological processes (production, then circulation, followed by consumption) whereby value, knowledge and occasional insertions of power are conceived of as operating up and down singular “chains.”¹ Increasingly, “lateral” global commodity chain approaches are gaining favor in which commodities are culturally contextualized within prevailing social formations in an effort to understand the meaning ascribed to objects by those who interact with them (Appadurai 1986). Few proponents of commodity chain and value chain approaches in apparel research have, however, extended their analyses to incorporate secondhand clothing (to some degree Hansen 2000, is an exception).

In analyzing secondhand clothes in Zambia, Hansen (2000) offers a cultural analysis whereby used clothing is seen not as derided “hand-me-downs” but rather a means for human agency in an increasingly global/local world (see also Hansen 1994, 1995, and 1999). While attentive to productions of meaning generated by consumers of *salaula* in Zambia, Hansen extends her analysis to encompass research on the global circulation of secondhand clothing. A focus on local complexity and the interactions of forces at a variety of scales, generating multiple moments of negotiation, enables Hansen to offer a positive view of the “*salaula*” (*mitumba*) phenomenon in Zambia - but one that

¹ This vertical chain approach has its critics (see Bridge and Smith 2003).

itself risks being too facile in its celebration of the ways in which Zambians have generated a unique approach to clothing, fashion, and economic hardship. Nevertheless, Hansen's extensive research on *salaula* presents a significant and compelling body of work on secondhand clothing and one that has contributed to an increasing awareness of the trade in the popular press.

This recent rise in (popular) interest in the secondhand clothing trade to Africa has been effectively publicized using a lateral commodity chain approach by reporters, filmmakers, and academics who, in some cases, have followed a specific garment from the original apparel purchase and/or its donation through sorting, shipping, wholesaling and then retailing to a new consumer in Africa (McKinley 1996, Bloemen 2001, Dougherty 2004, Rivoli 2005). The attempts at contextualization offered by these works (with varying degrees of failure and success) often succeed in providing a richer sense of the dynamics involving the secondhand clothing trade in Africa than vertical simplicity can provide, but are nevertheless bereft in their overarching emphasis on a certain linearity. As the secondhand clothing trade connects to and circulates with a variety of actors, scales, decisions, dictates, meanings, and desires, reaching into nooks and crannies obscured by a linear approach necessitated by "chains," complexity remains unaccounted for, diminishing, the power of the analysis.

In an example of this "follow the garment" approach, the economist Pietra Rivoli offers a triumphant portrayal of *mitumba* in Tanzania, reminiscent of (and indeed invoking) Thomas Friedman in her 2005 bestseller *The Travels of a T-shirt in the Global*

Economy. Her deeply problematic portrayal of Tanzanian women aside², for Rivoli, *mitumba* offer:

A natural economic success story...a simple market dynamic that portends well for the future. At the end of the T-shirt's life, there is a refreshingly simple story of a winning business for America, a story built on a clean market logic rather than a web of political intrigue. While the U.S. textile and apparel industry is kept alive only by unnatural acts of life support in Washington, and U.S. cotton producers compete through acts of politics, here [*mitumba* in Tanzania] is another business, mostly unheard of and largely ignored, whose promise lies in the simple matter of a compelling economic logic. At the end of my T-shirt's life, it is refreshing, too, to see a real market in action, to see prices that move with the location of a collection bin or the time of day, where anyone with a bale is allowed to play...The used clothing trade is a dance of the gazelles with no protection from the lions [here referencing Friedman 2000]. It is a marvel to watch. (2005:208)

The "simplicity" Rivoli celebrates is bereft of the multitude of complexities, negotiations, struggles and contestations evident in Kenya (and Tanzania, despite her portrayal) for those engaged in the *mitumba* trade and those for whom its popularity offers a constant threat. An understanding of secondhand clothing (its influence and its importance) in all its density, requires an engagement with broader and interrelated currents of localized histories of cloth and clothing, macroeconomic strategies, neoliberalism, trade regimes, and an ethnographic approach to the people in given communities as subjects in an ongoing process of negotiation with these and other factors.

Unlike Rivoli, Hansen (2000) offers an exemplary approach to secondhand clothing (and indeed, all clothing research) in weaving together both ethnographic and political economic "threads." Secondhand clothes offer an analytic not to bridge a

² In prose worthy of the nineteenth century, Rivoli offers the following compliments: "The most stunning scenery in Tanzania is not the savannah landscape but the African women. They stand taller and prouder than women anywhere, perhaps from years of carrying bananas and flour on the tops of their heads, perhaps from years of holding their country together. The white women – European backpackers, lunching diplomatic wives, missionary aid workers – fade away in comparison, graceless and silly in the shadow of the African queens. Many of the African women in Dar es Salaam are draped in the brilliantly colored native cloth, graceful folds wrapping their strong bodies and stronger spirits. They are brilliantly colored splashes across the poverty and grief of Tanzania." (Rivoli 2005:189-190).

seeming economic and cultural divide but rather, as subjects themselves, they express a materiality that illuminates a “gap” between professed divides as illusory (see Crang 1997, Thrift 2000, Barnes 2003, Amin with Thrift 2007). The challenge is undeniably to speak of the myriad of possibilities, contingencies, and agencies in meaningful ways, taking into account not only “discrete” objects of analysis - production, consumption, economic policies, identities, trade regimes, local markets, historical elisions, global networks, etc. - but their interactive dynamism. These aims are pursued in the following discussion of *mitumba*.

Global and Local Secondhand

While recent international agreements on export manufacture and trade have prompted considerable research on African apparel production, particularly within sub-Saharan Africa’s export processing zones (see Gibbon 2000a; 2000b; 2002; 2003), secondhand clothing for consumption in these same markets is mentioned only tangentially (research by McCormick and colleagues -1994, 2001, 2002 - at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Nairobi, provides a notable exception). An increasing interest in secondhand clothing research in Africa has appeared in the anthropological literature (Hansen, 1994; 1995; 1999; 2000), although by Hansen’s own admission “little research has been done [in anthropology] on clothing production issues” (2004:369). McRobbie (1988) and Haggblade (1990) conducted comparatively early research on the pervasive phenomenon of secondhand clothing in sub-Saharan Africa.

More recent studies of Zimbabwe (2000) and *mitumba* in Kenya (n.d.) were carried out by Field and remain unpublished³ (McCormick 2006, personal communication).

The post-independence period in Kenya (and throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa) was characterized by an increased emphasis on domestic production of textiles and finished apparel for local consumption through ISI policies. Governments turned to clothing as a visible and potentially lucrative expression of pride and solidarity in new nations with a focus on campaigns encouraging or otherwise imposing ‘dress codes’ or national dress, using domestic print cloth from these new industries (Kaderdina, personal interview, 29 May 2006, Mombasa). While the importation of secondhand clothing was banned throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa during the pursuit of ISI, in the early years of independent Kenya, secondhand clothing was permitted. Following independence in 1963, the secondhand clothing trade in Kenya was permitted and regulated as a consumer good under the auspices of the Kenya National Trading Corporation (KNTC) (SIN.4/238/144)⁴, a parastatal monopoly established in 1964 to control wholesale trading of consumer commodities including sugar, cooking oil, *khanga*,

³ A report of this Kenya research is available at <http://www.lmb.co.uk/downloads/TextilesInAfrica.pdf>.

⁴ In an undated document (likely 1966 or early 1967) obtained in the Kenyan National Archive (SIN.4/238/144) the author, F. Kanyua, notes the following: “I met three Belgian businessmen led by Mr. Gaston Dekeyser on the 14th of November 1966, who are keen to start a second-hand clothes factory here in Kenya. They informed me that they already have a similar factory in Burundi where they are employing about three hundred workers. What they actually plan to do in Kenya is to clean, repair, grade, and repack the second-hand clothes in bales for distribution to African dealers...It appears that there is room for such an industry as this which will save on foreign exchange, employ local people and bring money into the country. In 1965 the import of second-hand clothing in the three East African territories was as follows: Kenya – 4,207,485 (number) and £412,642 (value), Uganda – 1,511,200 (number) and £187,900 (value) and Tanzania – 781,209 (number) and £98,083 (value). At the present time the importation of second-hand clothing is a monopoly of KNTC but this need not conflict with the factory because they could both be given licenses to import with the new company importing these clothes for repair and doing other preparation work while KNTC would also continue to import and also work as agent-dealers to distribute for the new company.” Subsequent exchanges indicate the numerous conditions required by KNTC (SIN.4/238/147) likely derailed the Belgian proposal.

and secondhand clothes (Leys 1975). As more textile and garment manufacturers were established in Kenya in the late 1960s and 1970s (Chapter 3, Fig. 1), the continuing importation of *mitumba* was banned in 1984 to further protect local apparel industries (McCormick 1994). This ban went into effect 15 years after the founding of what has since become the largest *mitumba* market in East Africa – Gikomba in Nairobi⁵.

Despite the ban, secondhand clothing continued entering Kenya in the 1980s as a consequence of regional political crises. Conflict in neighboring Uganda, Sudan, and Ethiopia resulted in increasing populations of refugees in Kenyan camps. Charitable organizations working with displaced persons were able to import used clothing to serve the needs of these impoverished communities during this period, with some of the donations reportedly finding their way into surrounding villages and later urban areas as commodities for resale (Kimani, 2002:4). Protectionist measures implemented after independence to foster domestic industrial growth were eliminated under trade liberalization policies begun in Kenya in 1991. The previous ban on secondhand clothes, while only intermittently enforced (Nguku, personal interview, 30 March 2006, Nairobi), was overturned in 1991, in an atmosphere of widespread liberalization. Secondhand used clothing was again legally allowed into the country for resale, and at prices far below that of new, domestically manufactured apparel. McCormick et al. describe these transformations in the clothing sector:

“Kenya, after some hesitation, embarked on a liberalisation course in the early 1990s. The country removed foreign exchange controls, dropped quantitative restrictions on imports, reduced tariffs, and promoted exports. The impact on imports was dramatic. Between 1996 and 2000, the value of Kenya’s imports rose by nearly half (Republic of Kenya 2002). Exports, on the other hand, increased by a much more modest 12%. Instead of boosting local industry, liberalisation caused an imbalance between imports and

⁵ Nguku, Chairman, WaChagga Traders of Gikomba, personal interview, 30 March 2006, Nairobi.

exports that created serious problems in a number of sectors. The garment industry was one of those most noticeably affected by the surge in imports. In Nairobi, second-hand clothes, commonly called *mitumba*, were everywhere.” (McCormick et al. 2002:2).

*Mitumba*⁶, were cheaper than Kenyan products and rapidly gained favor with consumers (Ongile and McCormick, 1996). This popularity was achieved despite the stigma of garments associated with “dead Europeans” or of being “dead in Europe” - *kafa Ulaya* - an earlier term for *mitumba* (Nyang’oro 2004). The changing market was reflected in the clothing production index, which plummeted from a high of 378.6 in 1989 to only 154.8 in 1999, a drop of 40.9% (McCormick et al., 2001). The countries of sub-Saharan Africa now form the world’s largest secondhand clothing destination, receiving 30% of total world exports in 2001 with a value of USD \$405 million, up from \$117 million in 1990 (United Nations, 1996, 2003).

	Weight (Kg)	Consumption per capita	Number of Garments (est.)	Number of Traders (est.)
Tanzania	48,932,746	1.375	195,730,984	90,616**
Kenya	41,932,746	2.064	165,083,988	76,428**

Table 4. Comparison of Kenyan and Tanzanian⁷ *mitumba* imports, 2002.
Sources: UNCTAD 2003, ** ITGLWF estimates.

⁶ While the translation of *mitumba* as “bales” is widely reported (see Hansen 2000), in conducting this research, interviewees did not offer a similar interpretation. When I asked the meaning of *mitumba* I was told the word refers to used things – usually clothing, but also vehicles, etc.. When I continued by asking if the term also referred to “bales,” this interpretation was rejected. Instead, informants suggested that bales or bundles would be *robota* and, in reference to clothes, *robota la nguo*. Others commented that they had “no idea” how the term *mitumba* was derived (Nguku, personal interview, 30 March 2006, Nairobi).

⁷ Tanzania and Kenya are the second and third largest secondhand clothing importers in Sub-Saharan Africa after Ghana (UNCTAD 2003). According to currently available 2005 data at COMTRADE, Ghana is currently the world’s leading importer of HS 6309 (worn clothing), by value (USD \$94,142,700), superceding Japan which had long ranked first (\$74,677,380). Malaysia, Canada, and Tunisia round out the top 5.

Occupying the tenuous spaces between “informal” and “formal” (or “modern,” as designated by the Government of Kenya), *mitumba* sellers and the markets they populate face an exacerbated precariousness that is nothing if not widespread throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Nevertheless, the choice to engage in *mitumba* sales is a popular one, often perceived as a “stepping-stone” to better entrepreneurial opportunities. As some organizations have attempted to estimate⁸ (see Table 4, above), the remuneration associated with *mitumba* sales, while not predictable, may exceed, on average, the wages earned by workers in the EPZ garment sector. The International Textile Garment and Leather Worker’s Federation has estimated, based on surveys conducted in Kenya with *mitumba* sellers⁹, an average monthly wage of USD \$96 (ITGLWF 2005). The average wage of a garment worker in Kenya’s EPZ, as reported by the EPZ Authority is, by contrast, USD \$63.51 (EPZA 2005). *Mitumba* sales in Kenya directly engage an estimated workforce of 76,428 (2002 estimates, ITGLWF 2005), compared to current estimates of 27,000 - 30,000 (2007, see Table 2) for export apparel manufacturing employment.

Domestic consumption patterns, including those associated with *mitumba*, are likewise difficult to ascertain given available statistical information. While the vast majority of Kenyans labor in the “informal sector,” (an estimated 6.4 million out of total

⁸ Given that *mitumba* employment, while partially regulated in some locations by local city councils (requiring rents and annual licenses), is “informal,” statistics are difficult to obtain. Kenya’s Economic Survey indicates that 9 out of 10 jobs “created by the economy” in 2005 were in the informal sector (an estimated 414,000). As the government likewise describes these *jua kali* positions as “small-scale activities that are semi-organised, unregulated, and use low and simple technologies while employing few persons” (Economic Survey 2006:74), this is hardly cause to celebrate.

⁹ While I appreciate such surveys of sellers and while I am eager to obtain either corroboration or refutation of these figures, I was unable to collect information on this topic due to my own discomfort in asking. Knowing the sensitivity in Kenya, and throughout much of the world, to questions regarding personal income, and keenly aware of the fiscal disparities between me as a reasonably well-funded U.S. graduate student, and many of my interviewees, I did not attempt to obtain this information during interviews.

of 8.2 million in employment as described by the government in 2006), information on actual numbers “informally” employed, wage rates, etc. are unavailable. Average wages in the comparatively small “modern sector,” both public and private, were described as 330,000 Ksh per annum, or \$4714 USD (Economic Survey, 2006). From these wages, “private consumption” on clothing and footwear, as a percentage of total individual expenditures, was estimated to have declined from 4.6% in 2001 to 3.3% of annual income in 2005 (ibid.:32).

***Mitumba* geographies**

Commodities traded under the designation HS6309 - HS (Harmonized System) Tariff Code 6309 - include: “worn clothing and clothing accessories, blankets and traveling rugs, household linen and articles for interior furnishing, of all types of textile materials, incl. all types of footwear and headgear showing signs of appreciable wear and presented in bulk or in bales, sacks, or similar packings (excl. carpets, other floor coverings and tapestries)” (Comext Eurostat Trade Data). The United Nation’s Commodity Trade Statistics Database, COMTRADE, lists the following top five global exporters of *mitumba*, or HS 6309¹⁰ commodities, based on available data for 2005: USA, United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, and the Republic of Korea. Reflecting this trend, Kenya imports *mitumba* from the following top five countries based on import figures from 2000 through 2004: United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, USA, and the United Arab Emirates (Fig. 17, see also Fig. 18, Fig. 19, and Table 5 for comparative data on EU

¹⁰ The HTS or Harmonized Tariff Schedule is based upon the international Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS) 4- and 6- digit categories. These are further subdivided into 8 digit unique U.S. rate lines and 10-digit non-legal statistical reporting categories.

mitumba exports to Kenya, below). India ranks 7th in HS 6309 exports to Kenya, just behind The Netherlands and well ahead of Italy (comtrade.un.org/db, accessed June 15 2007). While the top four *mitumba* exporters to Kenya are to be expected given the global ranking of HS 6309 exporting countries, the appearance of the United Arab Emirates¹¹ in fifth place is a striking addition (discussed further in Chapter 5).

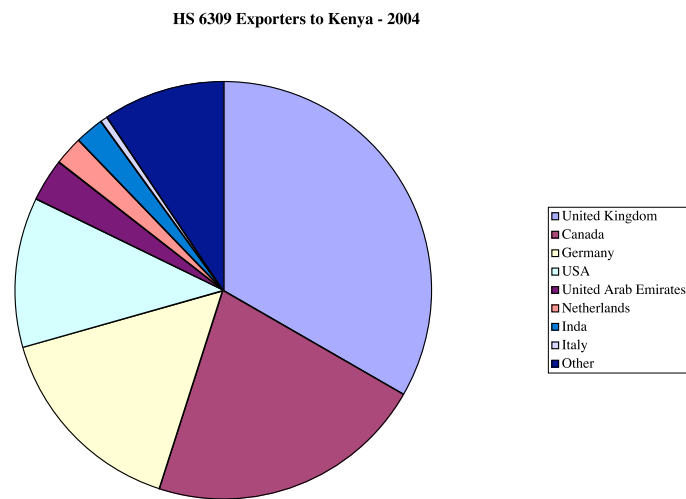


Fig. 17. HS 6309 exporters to Kenya – 2004 (last available data year)
Source: UN COMTRADE (comtrade.un.org/db).

¹¹ While re-exports are always a likely possibility when discussion commodity trade with the U.A.E., given its status as a transshipment hub, COMTRADE data specify this figure as “exports” and not “re-exports” – another query category and one which did not result in a substantial figure.

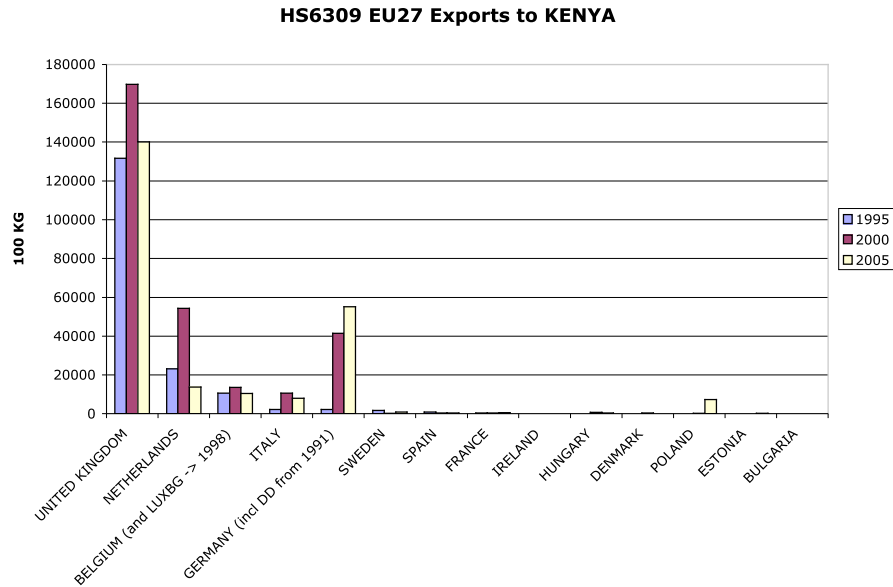


Fig. 18. *Mitumba* exports to Kenya from EU27 (1995-2005), by quantity (kg).
Source: Comext, <http://fd.comext.eurostat.cec.eu.int>, last accessed June 12, 2007.

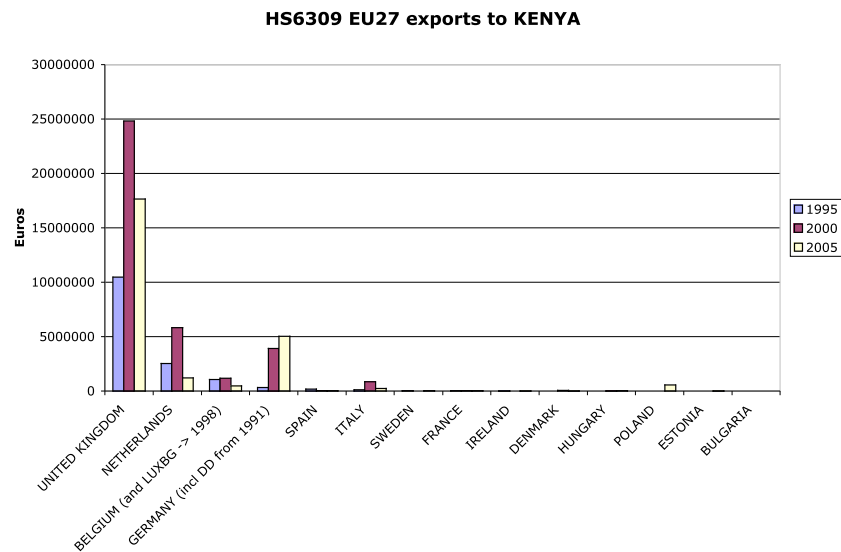


Fig. 19. *Mitumba* Exports to Kenya from EU 27 (1995-2005), by value (Euro).
Source: Comext, <http://fd.comext.eurostat.cec.eu.int>, last accessed June 12, 2007.

REPORTER/PARTNER	1995		2000		2005	
	100KG	Euros	100KG	Euros	100 KG	Euros
UNITED KINGDOM	131548	10469909	169759	24798836	140006	17635007
NETHERLANDS	23049	2535066	54410	5840981	13826	1197015
BELGIUM (and LUXBG -> 1998)	10574	1056691	13570	1189782	10471	486251
GERMANY (include DD from 1991)	2133	330024	41454	3914399	55130	5035841
SPAIN	874	174171	454	37958	348	28325
ITALY	2211	107144	10588	859711	7928	252992
SWEDEN	1752	38987	174	4999	834	37761
FRANCE	341	22575	314	43943	547	26798
IRELAND	10	10575	27	6223	15	10385
FINLAND	5	219				
DENMARK			364	53671	35	15519
HUNGARY			688	20100	419	40451
POLAND			187	6649	7351	559621
GREECE			3	1412		
ESTONIA					164	19431
BULGARIA					26	2870

Table 5. *Mitumba* exports (HS 6309) to Kenya from EU27: 1995-2005

Source: Comext, <http://fd.comext.eurostat.cec.eu.int>, last accessed June 12, 2007.

***Mitumba* and everyday life in Kenya**

In March 2005, the East African Council of Ministers, under the umbrella of the East Africa Customs Union (EACU), imposed a major tariff increase equivalent to 200 percent on *mitumba*, ostensibly to both stem cross border smuggling and aid the ailing textiles sector (East African Legislative Assembly, 9 March 2005)¹². The new import tariff amounted, in Kenya, to an increase from 20 Ksh per kg to 60 Ksh per kg, requiring traders to pay, on average, \$21,214 USD in duty for a container of 550 bales weighing 24,750 kg - up from \$7,000 USD (Mwangi 2005).

These proposed changes to *mitumba* import tariffs generated organized demonstrations in Nairobi and Mombasa against the new rate, while individual dealers

¹² eac.int/eala/documents/hd2005/9Mar2005.pdf

contacted the press, placed articles in local newspapers, and arranged television interviews - accusing the government of robbing them of their livelihood and calling the tax imposition “punitive” (ibid.). The Kenyan government relented, presently requiring importers to pay \$0.6 USD per kg from the proposed \$0.8 per kg (U.S. Department of State 2005)¹³. Despite the higher costs associated with *mitumba* since the (reduced) changes took effect, secondhand garments have shown few signs of retreat.

Far from the days of shame and stigma noted above, in Kenya today, most everyone wears *mitumba*¹⁴. What was once an option of desperation has become not only mainstream, but quite trendy, according to informants from all walks of life seeking in *mitumba* not only the bare necessities of clothing but particular styles, garments, colors, and fit they can reportedly find nowhere else in Kenya (for a list of imported *mitumba* garments, see Table 6, below). *Mitumba* is not, however, an option for all. Despite the comparatively low prices¹⁵, *mitumba* is beyond the reach of many Kenyans, as interviewees attest (while emphasizing that they, however, can afford at least the occasional *mitumba* purchases). In Nairobi, *mitumba* is available in a multitude of sites, from city pavements and roadside stalls, to dedicated markets, each often associated with a particular focus and clientele. Dominating all establishments is the vast Gikomba market, east of the city center (Fig. 20).

¹³ <http://commercecan.ic.gc.ca>

¹⁴ In Nairobi, particularly, Kenyans were quick to point out members of Parliament rumored to wear *mitumba* and to claim “so-and-so” politician was seen shopping in the secondhand markets. Similarly, though more believably, I was often told that government officials sent their staff to *mitumba* markets to purchase the best items for their personal use. While none of this speculation was corroborated in the course of this research, its pervasiveness in Nairobi, particularly, is worth noting with respect to the general level of acceptance now afforded *mitumba*.

¹⁵ One jeans seller, pictured in Chapter 1 (Fig. 3), offered each garment at Gikomba for 150 Ksh, or \$2 USD (in 2006). By contrast, new jeans selling in “exhibitions” cost upwards of 400 Ksh (nearly \$5 USD), and often considerably higher.



Fig. 20. Gikomba market, Nairobi (April 2006).

Bed Covers	Ladies Cotton Blouse	Mens Suits (40 pcs)
Belts	Ladies Cotton Dress	Mens Tergal Pants (200 pcs)
Blankets	Ladies Cotton Skirt	Childrens medium rummage
Boys Pants (200 pcs)	Ladies T-shirt	Slips
Boys Shirts	Ladies Light Jacket	Night-dresses
Boys Zippers	Ladies Pants (200pcs)	Nylon Rummage
Bras	Ladies Poly Blouse	Ties
Caps	Ladies Poly Dress	Original Shorts
Net Curtains	Ladies Poly Skirt	Silk Scarves
Child Sweaters	Tergal Skirts	Swim wear
Child T-shirts	Leather Jacket	Socks
Girls Cotton Dress	Mens Cotton Pants (200 pcs)	Soft Toys
Handbags (27.5 kg sack)	Mens Cotton T-shirt	Shoes (graded and paired,
Household Rummage	Mens Jacket (75 pcs)	30kg sack)
Jeans (100 pcs)	Mens Shirts (400 pcs)	

Table 6. *Mitumba* categories imported into Kenya as 45 kg bale (or as indicated)¹⁶
Source: wholesaler and retailer interviews, March – June 2006, Nairobi and Mombasa

¹⁶ “Tergal” is a synthetic fiber and common category for both men’s trousers and women’s skirts available as *mitumba* in Kenya. While known in France (and throughout the mitumba industry in Kenya) as Tergal, in the United States its trade name is Dacron. In Britain, the fiber is known as Terylene, in Japan, Tetoron, and in Russia, Lavsan.

The majority of the items listed above, packed in 45 kg bales sealed in clear, white, or blue plastic wrap and graded as either A or B quality in their country of export (with “A” products in better condition), enter Kenya at Kilindini port in Mombasa but are first transported to Gikomba in Nairobi prior to wider distribution. The wholesale *mitumba* business in Kenya is centered in Gikomba, with guarded godowns (warehouses) with small offices attached, concentrated in a warren of alleys amidst the stalls. Trucks squeeze through narrow lanes swollen with shoppers (and slick with mud during the rainy season) to reach the small warehouse “district” where the bales are offloaded by day laborers. Radiating out from the wholesalers are innumerable small stalls, with areas specializing in t-shirts, jeans, baby clothing, women’s undergarments, shoes, caps, sheets, leather jackets, and other essentials. Large supporting jobs have developed in tandem with *mitumba*, as is evident in Gikomba¹⁷. Here, concentrated in the midst of the stalls, are densely populated areas of clothes washers, pressers, and tailors available for alterations and on-the-spot mending of otherwise attractive garments (Fig. 21).

¹⁷ In Gikomba, these workers have organized a self-help group to collectively address their specific concerns. The following reference to this organization, The Kamukunji Society, was located online: “The Kamukunji Riverside Tailoring and Ironing Society, a welfare group based in Gikomba area in Nairobi, will mark World Habitat Day with activities at the grass root level to raise awareness and stimulate debate on this year’s theme of *The Millennium Development Goals and the City*. The celebrations will be held in the informal settlements of Majengo and Pumwani in Nairobi at the historic Kamukunji grounds and the Child Survival Primary School respectively.” UN Habitat – World Habitat Day 2005 - <http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?typeid=19&catid=379&cid=299>).



Fig. 21. Gikomba market seamstress, patching a hole in a just-purchased down jacket (April 2006).

Shoppers come to Gikomba for the best prices and best selection, but the market is not without its detractors. A reputation of insecurity and squalor has been associated with the site, the latter of which is reinforced by periodic market closures for mass rat exterminations – primarily in sections of the market where fresh food is sold (*The Standard* January 10, 2006). Some prospective shoppers who are otherwise attracted to *mitumba* seek alternative locations for these and other reasons, including the market’s large size. Smaller markets are everywhere throughout the city, serving their nearby constituents including Toi Market in Kibera, a vast and densely inhabited settlement to the southwest of the city center. Elsewhere, Ngara market is home to both a reduced *mitumba* area - having suffered crackdowns on kiosk trading in the preceding years – and a large density of small enterprise *jua kali*¹⁸ tailors and seamstresses creating ready-to-wear and individually commissioned clothing within a concrete walled section of the

¹⁸ *Jua kali* is literally “fierce sun” – the evocative Swahili term for the informal sector in East Africa and a description of the conditions endured by most practitioners.

market. Ngara attracts many residents nearby residing in the area's apartment blocks and is readily accessible to workers traveling to and from the city given its location on a major artery north of town. Gikomba, Ngara and other established *mitumba* markets are owned and operated by the Nairobi City Council, which sells space outright or charges traders daily stall fees, and issues trading licenses, renewable annually (personal interviews, various, Nairobi).

In the downtown area, a relatively new and ambitious *mitumba* market was established by 'hawkers' on the corner of Moi Avenue and Gedi Street in 1998, following the tragic partial collapse and later demolition of the Sunbeam Supermarket at the same site in May 1996¹⁹. Sunbeam "Exhibition" market offered city workers with some disposable income a more "upmarket" *mitumba* experience, while maintaining its *jua kali* setting. Here, a warren of small stalls was densely packed into a partial city block, demarcated by a non-descript 15-foot high fence of roughly assembled corrugated iron sheets (Fig. 22). Inside, nearly two hundred stall keepers offered the best selections from Gikomba's bales – a category of *mitumba* known in locally as *camera* – due to being "clear and sharp and clean," according to one interviewee (Suad, personal interview, 6 April 2006, Nairobi, see also Field, n.d., for a discussion of *camera*²⁰).

Workers at Sunbeam and other *mitumba* markets begin their mornings early at Gikomba, where those who purchase *mitumba* by the bale first open their package to examine the contents and, often, sell individual garments to other retailers having first

¹⁹ On this day, 35 people were killed when heavy rains contributed to the collapse of the supermarket's concrete canopy (*The Standard*, Tuesday, January 24, 2006, last accessed June 16, 2007 - http://www.eastandard.net/archives/cl/hm_news/news.php?articleid=35438).

²⁰ <http://www.lmb.co.uk/downloads/TextilesInAfrica.pdf>

selected their preferred pieces.²¹ Clothing deemed “best quality” by stall entrepreneurs is in turn purchased directly from bale owners and brought to outlying markets, or to stalls throughout Gikomba proper, for sale. At Sunbeam, considerable care was taken in the packaging and presentation of garments, as well as in the services provided, including mirrors at some stalls and the occasional “dressing room” provided by a strategically situated curtain. Men’s dress shirts, for instance, were often pressed and folded, paired with a matching knotted tie around the collar, wrapped in clear plastic, and carefully stacked. Here and at other markets throughout Kenya, clothing was meticulously arranged on locally made hangers to highlight each garment. This presentation contrasts with the often barebones style at Gikomba, where some stands offer their clothing, at bargain prices, jumbled in piles. Shoppers sought the latest in trendy fashions, including the “Tyra” look²² and appreciated the ease of use and proximity of the market²³. The extra effort evident at Sunbeam came, not surprisingly, with a price – as *mitumba* garments at this downtown market cost, on average, 25-50% more than comparable items at

²¹ The price of a bale of *mitumba* bought in Gikomba varied according to grade and item contents. First or second grade bundles (also referred to as A and B) brought a diminishing price, respectively. Likewise, certain garment categories netted a higher price – bundles of ladies bras, for instance – on the basis of their subsequent sale price and/or popularity.

²² After Tyra Banks, the American “supermodel,” talk show host, and television impresario, whose U.S. based-program, The Tyra Banks Show (catering to a younger crowd in an Oprah Winfrey vein), was broadcast on KTN (Kenyan television) four times per week in 2006.

²³ The following exchange, obtained in a Nairobi focus group, was typical of the enthusiasm shoppers showed for Sunbeam [my questions are bracketed]: [Having described the clothes you have on, you are obviously comfortable talking about wearing *mitumba*, buying *mitumba*...so it's not something that's in anyway embarrassing? C: NOOOO!! S: It's very good qualities. C: As in...like even my sister, who works, when she wants a good pair of jeans, or very nice shoes, stylish shoes which you won't find other people wearing...L: Unique ones. C: You go to Sunbeam, you definitely get them there [You don't go to Kikomba?]. C: The hassle of going there is not worth it. OK, there are so many things first and before you get something that is really nice and unique you have to go through so many tops and so many trousers before you get one...now the difference with Sunbeam is practically everything is nice. L: Cause they're mostly young people [at Sunbeam] who choose only the nice stuff.(focus group – Suad, Leyla, Cynthia, 6 April 2006, Nairobi).

Gikomba²⁴ (where time, effort, and perseverance would occasionally be rewarded with a fashionable garment, in good condition, at the cheapest price).



Fig. 22. Passersby outside the corrugated walls of the now-defunct Sunbeam *mitumba* market, Nairobi City Centre (March 2006)²⁵.

Before “reclaiming” Sunbeam market, Nairobi City Council inspected *duka* (shops) and provided trading licenses to *mitumba* dealers. Given the costs of the purchase or rental of stalls (at Sunbeam daily rents ranged from 250-500 Ksh according to the site manager, whose primary role in the market was to serve as fee collector) and annual fees for trading licenses (5200 Ksh), three or four people commonly rented a stall, collectively, sharing the workload in the process (personal interviews, various). A number and often a name (i.e., “Beegees Boutique, stall #154” or “Woolworth Collection

²⁴ This figure is based on a survey of ten sellers at both Sunbeam and Gikomba and corresponding interviews with shoppers at both markets as to their perceptions of price differences.

²⁵ According to continuing reports by interviewees (and echoed by the blog “Riba Capital,” which posted photographs of the scene), Nairobi City Council reclaimed the land occupied by Sunbeam and demolished all kiosks in April 2007. Plans for the prime-located plot on Moi Avenue (one block north of the former U.S. Embassy building, destroyed in 1998), and the current whereabouts of its many traders, are unknown (see also ribacapital.blogspot.com/2007/04/sunbeam-market.html).

#119) designated each stall at Sunbeam (as well as Gikomba). Though on a considerably smaller scale than Gikomba, “secondary” *mitumba* industries, including pressing, mending, hanger fabrication, etc., were similarly integral to the functioning of the markets, employment generation, and customer satisfaction.

Mzee Nguku

On my first visit to Gikomba in March 2006, a series of initial inquiries with traders led to an introduction with “Mzee Nguku,” chairman of the informal Gikomba Traders Association and, like many of those involved in the retail sale of *mitumba* at Gikomba, a Chagga from Tanzania²⁶. We exchanged contact information and I proceeded to contact him, via his mobile, two days later to arrange an interview.

As described by Nguku, who is fifty-two years old, originally from Moshi District in Tanzania, and who first came to Kenya in 1975 for “business purposes,” Kenya was (and remains) an attractive base for trade. In the 1970s, particularly, Kenya was also the regional source for cloth and clothing preferred among East Africans²⁷:

In the past I used to bring goods from Tanzania and sell them in Kenya and vice versa. [What kind of goods?]. We used to bring to Kenya [from Tanzania] diapers, tires, radios, and from Kenya we bought textiles, especially material for trousers, and sent them to Tanzania. After a while business changed, and we started buying clothes such as trousers and khanga from Rivatex, to send to Tanzania. In those days there were no khanga manufacturing in Tanzania. In those days, 1975, Tanzanian industries were only

²⁶ The ethnic breakdown of Gikomba included wholesalers, predominantly women and exclusively Kikuyu, and a reported majority of traders identifying as Chagga from the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania. Explanations for this relative uniformity were not forthcoming, with the exception of a number of individuals who noted their awareness, through family and community networks, of others from their home engaged in trading at Gikomba. These social networks provided an important basis for starting in the business and for attending to any problems, crises, or other emergencies they might face (particularly with respect to Tanzanian traders).

²⁷ In the following narrative, I have presented Nguku’s comments in italics and my questions in brackets. The original conversation was conducted in Kiswahili and subsequently translated into English.

manufacturing plain and uniformed clothes, which were not a favorite of many. So good clothes were believed to come from Kenya.

Mitumba was relatively unknown to his generation in Kenya and Tanzania, having grown exponentially in availability since the late 1980s and early 1990s following economic “liberalization” throughout East Africa. As a young man near Moshi (TZ), Nguku wore clothes fashioned from *merikani*, the primary cloth available in East Africa since the early 19th century (see Chapter 2). *Mitumba* was an exotic item at that time, associated with Kenya:

[What did you wear when you were young?] I put on shorts and shirts made of merikani fabric. But I do not know why it was called so...[What color was the merikani?] It was khaki and other times white. [Did you wear mitumba?] There was no mitumba in Tanzania in those days. It was only found in Kenya. [Where did the name ‘mitumba’ come from?] Nobody knows. What Kenyans as well as Tanzanians say is that mitumba are clothes brought to Africa and these mitumba clothes belonged to dead people. The common name used to represent those dead people is ‘marehemu George’ (meaning “the late George”). [Is it true that the word ‘mitumba’ means “bales”?] No. mitumba is just a Swahili name. Bale simply means “packing.” I do not know. Maybe the term was coined by Mwalimu Nyerere. I say so because he was against the importation of secondhand clothes. He even called used motor vehicles imported from Dubai “mitumba.” [Even used vehicles are referred to as mitumba?] Everything - clothes, vehicles, used cutlery and so on.

From his cross-border beginnings, trading an array of commodities following the closure of the Tanzania-Kenya border in 1977 (and the associated demise of the East African Community), Nguku turned to *mitumba* in the early 1980s. The attractiveness of Kenya at that time is evident in his justifications for leaving Tanzania to pursue trading opportunities elsewhere:

[When did you get involved with mitumba?] I started to sell mitumba here in Gikomba in 1982 - this market was started by a Chagga man from Tanzania back in 1965. So by 1982, these bales of mitumba were really cheap. They ranged in price from between 1000 to 3000 shillings but now they have gone up to 9000- shillings. [Why did you together with other Chagga decide to trade in Kenya instead of in your home country?] We just followed our predecessors. Also, we were using East African currency in the beginning

and when this was stopped, Kenyan shillings became stronger than all the others. So we followed the Kenyan currency, which is still strong.

Nguku offered his commentary on the structure of the *mitumba* trade in Kenya, including the geographies of its global and local circulations and the ethnic framework within which it operates in Nairobi:

[Which kind of *mitumba* did you start to sell?] *I started with suits because it was during the cold season. [Where did you get your supply from?] From Sofia, in Canada. [Canada? Not the Sofia in Bulgaria?] Then Bulgaria. I do not remember well but all I remember is that the label read SOFIA. [Where do people import mitumba from these days?] England, Sweden, Germany and also the United States. [What about Asia?] In Asia they do not bring (export) mitumba they only bring (export) new clothes.*

[How do *mitumba* enter Kenya?] *Mombasa. They come in a container which is stored somewhere in the godown and a little is brought daily by small lorries to the market [in Nairobi], according to demand. [Is there any relationship between Gikomba and Kongowea (main mitumba market in Mombasa)?] Mombasa people buy camera (the best quality mitumba) in Gikomba to sell in Mombasa. [Why is that when the port is just next-door?] I'm also astonished by this, but they come with lots of money, buying in big quantities, especially short-sleeved clothes. [And people from Kisumu?] They come here as well. They bring their lorries and buy from Gikomba.*

[Are bales sorted when they reach the market?] *Bales bear labels such as "shirt," "dress," "trousers," or "child freeze (hooded sweatshirt)" when they arrive. [Who decides the grade given to each bale?] The grade is determined in the country of origin. [Do traders in Kenya agree with the grading?] Yes. It is self-evident. Grade one is always grade one. [What is the difference between grade 1 and 2?] Grade 1 is good. You might find some clothes that are not used at all. They are new in all definition. As for grade 2, you get many good clothes and a few bad ones. In a grade 1 bale of 250 pieces, 180 pieces are "camera" and the rest less "camera." That is grade 1. [What is the weight of a bale? 45 KGS?] It depends on your choice as importer. Some bales weigh 55 kgs.*

[Who imports *mitumba* into Kenya?] *Kikuyu women. Men also do, but women are the majority. [Did you say that Wachagga are the majority retailers here in Gikomba?] Yes. We also have other tribes like Kikuyu, Kamba, and others. But Wachagga are more in number.*

[How did you become Chairman (of the WaChagga traders of Gikomba)?] *The Tanzanian Embassy supports the registration of all Tanzanians with TWA- Tanzania Welfare Association. So I became Chairman for Gikomba in the election which is supposed to be conducted every three years. [How do members contribute?] 240- shillings annually. I am just a volunteer - I don't get a salary. I just depend on my business. [Do other traders*

have their own chairman like the Chagga?] *Yes they do but we don't interact with each other. Most of them are selfish. They want to control everybody in Gikomba.*

[Please tell me about taxation for *mitumba*?] *Taxes on mitumba were very low but the NARC (National Rainbow Coalition) government increased them more. [Do you pay for a government trading license?] Yes. If one fails to pay, their goods are confiscated. [Is rent paid for the stalls every month?] No, each stall has an owner. If the owner decides to rent it, that is another case.*

Echoing interviewees throughout this project, Nguku commented on the perceived stylishness of *mitumba* and its increasing acceptance as preferred fashion. As an employment strategy, by contrast, Nguku sees *mitumba* as a desperate trade, offering relatively easy entry but a difficult life of insecurity, marginally better than other garment work:

[Which (*mitumba*) styles are most popular in Gikomba at the moment?] *The pleated skirt is in fashion. Any style in town first starts here in Gikomba. [Do you wear mitumba?] All my clothes are mitumba. I don't buy them - I am invited to choose the best by my friends. [Are you wearing mitumba now?] Yes. [What?] Everything. All that I have on is mitumba - head to toe.*

[It seems there are many Kenyans who are afraid to come to Gikomba because of bad security. Would you agree?] *That was a thing of the past. Insecurity is only present at the periphery of Gikomba and not inside. And it is the youth from the neighboring Majengo village who are terrorizing innocent people.*

[Are your children selling *mitumba*?] *No. I don't like my children to do this kind of job. I had no option because my parents could not afford to school me due to poverty. I would rush to the farms and do some work to pay for my fees. So I want my children to study and do other jobs after completing their studies. But there is one (child) who refused to continue with school and worked in the transport business then went to Saudi Arabia to work and now is in Britain England working there. There are others doing different things but I do not wish them to work on mitumba. Still, I think the work is better than some other. It's better, I'm sure, than EPZ.*

Textiles and Apparel: Articulations and Outcomes

The collapse of domestic cloth production, symbolized by the demise of *khanga* and *kitenge*, has put Kenya in a precarious position under AGOA provisions to utilize

domestic (or regional AGOA beneficiary) cloth for apparel export by October 2012. The National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government of Mwai Kibaki, in power since Kenya's first multiparty elections in December 2002, continues to rely on further extensions of AGOA "rules of origin," at the same time it persists in seeking to attract export garment manufacturers with tax holidays and favored status. Underlying the diminished capacity for textile (as opposed to apparel) manufacturing in Kenya, and the collapse of the domestic cotton industry that preceded the factory closures, is the overwhelming "popularity" in East Africa of secondhand clothing.

The increasing volume of *mitumba* entering Kenya throughout the 1990s is coupled with the closure of the majority of clothing and textile factories creating products for local consumption, both in the memory of Kenyans and in the relationship of these tandem outcomes with neoliberalism. While the importation of *mitumba* is viewed as a fundamental contributor to the collapse of domestic textile and apparel manufacturing in Kenya throughout the 1990s, the rise in the current export apparel market complicates this scenario. Many of the world's largest importers of secondhand clothing are also among the top exporters of textiles and garments, including Pakistan and Hong Kong (Hansen 2004:4). Under the current changes in AGOA, Kenya has likewise shifted to high imports of secondhand clothing for domestic consumption and an increasingly large volume of apparel for export (Fig. 23).

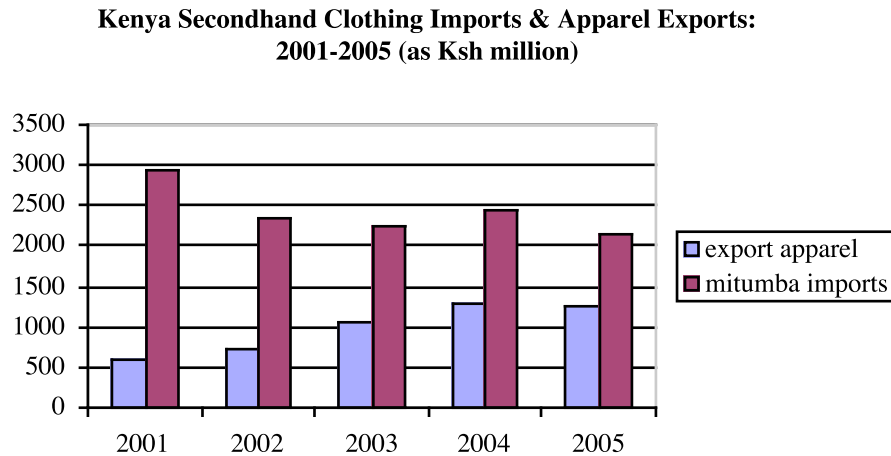


Fig. 23. Comparison of *mitumba* imports and EPZ garment exports, by value.
Source: Kenya Economic Survey 2006:121²⁸.

Alongside the expanding export sector, the local production of cloth, including African prints, struggles toward a future revival. Government agencies, manufacturing associations, and local designers in Kenya have begun advocating a revitalized African-consciousness by “wearing Kenya, buying Kenya” in an attempt to bolster African prints. In 2004, these efforts included a nationwide contest to select Kenya’s National Dress (BBC 16 September 2004). The competition and its results, while panned by interviewees, reflected the challenges of surmounting ethnic differences in multicultural Kenya²⁹. The “winning” garments combine Muslim and Maasai in assemblages unlikely

²⁸ While *mitumba* imports have been declining in Kenya, the government does not offer comparable statistics regarding the importation of new clothing for the domestic market. Thus this decline may indicate reduced Kenyan purchasing power with respect to apparel or it may indicate the competition to *mitumba* provided by the burgeoning new garment import trade in “Dubai clothes” (see Chapter 6).

²⁹ Newspaper articles, advertisements, and advice columns featured frequent mention of “national dress” two years following the “competition.” Bars and clubs noted dress requirements on particular nights as “national dress,” while confused Kenyans submitted letters seeking advice as to where to buy these “national” outfits. One interviewee rejected the search for a national dress, echoing the newspaper commentary: “If we have national dress in Kenya it must be Maasai...or maybe *mitumba*” (Cynthia personal interview, 6 April 2006, Nairobi). In an attempt to purchase ‘Kenyan National Dress’ at fabric and clothing shops the length of River Road and Tom Mboya Streets in Nairobi, I was met with uncertainty – while respondents knew of the competition and the resulting looks for men and women, no one was aware

to be readily worn (personal interviews, various). Myriad social groups found little common ground in selecting a garment that would adequately represent and appeal to Kenya's diverse populations – with one exception. Despite the inability to reach a popular consensus for a representative national look, wry newspaper commentary declared a contest unnecessary (Vasagar 2004). Kenyans “vote” for their national dress everyday where it mattered most - in what is bought at markets and worn on bodies - and the winner is...*mitumba*.

As local production of cloth and clothing for domestic consumption in Kenya declined (or altogether ceased as *khanga* and *kitenge*), new clothing geographies emerged with *mitumba* linking producers and the fast-changing fashion whims of consumers in the Global North; Asian and Middle Eastern entrepôt profiting from the resale of secondhand and new clothing to Africa; national tax revenues generated from the income produced by the importation of *mitumba*; the declining popularity of indigenous *khanga*; a concomitant rise in regional Islamic fashions among East African Muslims (see Chapter 5); the establishment of large secondhand markets; street sellers; new shopping malls; and the unexpected and evolving fashions of East African communities making *mitumba* their own.

The Kenyan landscape is profoundly altered by these apparel geographies. While the closure of textile and garment manufacturers has yielded a physical landscape of abandoned factories, devastating to local community economies, these same sites are being reimagined by investors interested in restarting these plants to produce export

of the suits for sale. Amongst the *jua kali* tailors in Ngara market, however, I met artisans eager to devise a custom-tailored national ensemble. If there is an economic promise in national dress, it is likely in this micro and small-scale enterprise, rather than a textile revival.

apparel, rather than textile inputs (or local clothing)³⁰. The creation of large wholesale/retail markets for *mitumba* sales, and the thousands of legal and illegal kiosks whose vendors rely on the trade, reveal both the concrete changes to Kenya's urban landscape (poised to increase with even more *mitumba*) and the cultural effects of the shift from 'vernacular' clothing styles, represented in part by *khanga* and *vitenge*, to an embrace of *mitumba* – the “fantastic garments” worn by EPZ workers, creating apparel for export (Udalagama, personal interview, 26 April 2006, Nairobi).

This “embrace” of *mitumba* is, however, a product of persistent poverty, entrenched inequalities, and government policies privileging export possibilities over local communities. These issues are ever-present in Kenya and enter conversations in, at times, unexpected ways. In concluding the interview with Nguku by asking him, in turn, what he would like to tell me, he offered the following reminder of our inexplicable, and unrelenting, disparities, based in large part on our randomly assigned identities (Fig. 24):

[What would you like us to know that we have not asked you?] I expected you to ask me, “How can I, Tina, import *mitumba* to Kenya?” For instance, Tina is American and wants to send a container of *mitumba* to Swaleh [research assistant] - what is the process of doing so? And can Swaleh remit the money back to Tina in America after the sale of *mitumba*? Those are some of the important issues I expected to be raised in this sitting. At the same time, how can Nguku get a container of *mitumba* in Kenya and how can he clear it because even if a person sends him a container he can't clear it because he has no money for that? So how can our brothers in the New World help their fellow brothers in Africa in this kind of business? I say this because we believe God visited our brothers in

³⁰ The primary *khanga* and *kitenge* production facilities previously extant in Kenya, including Rift Valley Textiles (RIVATEX) in Eldoret, which closed all spinning and weaving production in 2000, although *leso* manufacture ended in 1995, and Nanyuki's Mount Kenya Textile (MOUNTEX), which operated on and off through the late 1990s before closing in 2000, remain for sale and were until recently attracting the interest of prospective investors from India, the United States, and Thailand, amongst others (East African Standard, 2003). The professed aim of potential investors is, however, production of export apparel, rather than goods for the domestic market (ibid.). On 25 July 2007, the East African Standard and Daily Nation reported comments by Minister of Trade and Industry, Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, indicating the defunct RIVATEX factory in Eldoret will re-open soon as part of the government's efforts to fast track revival of textile factories (Oyuke 2007 http://www.eastandard.net/hm_news/news.php?articleid=1143971820, Nation 2007 http://www.nationmedia.com/dailynation/nmgcontententry.asp?category_id=3&newsid=103041).

the West before he visited us here in Africa - that is why we are less blessed. We must do that because that is the only way we can survive - that is even why governments have been forced to privatize many enterprises due to poverty. Because our brothers in the West are WELL OFF, so if they can help us we will highly appreciate it. Our only problem is capital but we are good at taking care of business and safeguarding people's property. Just the way I worked for an Indian in Tanzania and I faithfully sold his goods and sent him back his money without the loss of even a cent. That is my opinion and I am leaving it to Tina to think about it and see what she can do.



Fig. 24. *Mitumba* t-shirt, Gikomba (April 2006).

With African print cloth production and consumption, the rise in *mitumba*, and the recent turn to new “Dubai clothes” (Chapter 6), additional and understudied dynamics relate to cultural practices, identity transformations, and the generational trends that inform fashion. Muslim women are rejecting *leso* as public attire in urban areas, in favor of *buibui* (a black garment akin to *abaya* worn throughout the Gulf states). Interviewees describe *kitenge* wax prints, and the locally tailored dresses derived from this cloth, derisively as associated both with older generations (“my mum’s clothes” said one interviewee, rolling her eyes in disgust, when I asked if she had any *vitenge* dresses) and

with village living.³¹ Swahili men turn toward Islamic fashions and everyone shops, out of persistent necessity, for “fantastic” *mitumba*. As Nguku was well aware, and as he refused to allow me to ignore, the bases of our identities contribute profoundly to shaping our interactions and the limits of our possibilities within the cultural economies of apparel. Together these shifts are linked, in part, to wider identity transformations - as well as the whims of fashion itself - suggesting the paucity of apparel assessments focused exclusively on economic indicators.

³¹ This pervasive attitude among younger women with whom I spoke was nevertheless challenged in a series of fashion articles throughout 2006 in both the Nation and Standard newspapers highlighting the innovative and “haute couture” stylings of emergent designers in Kenya turning to *leso* and *vitenge* as the raw materials used to create hip, young looks (Wahome 2006:12-13, Kithaka 2006:11). The same interviewees disparaging of African fabrics, yet aware of these fresh designs (or shown photographs from the articles during the interview) expressed enthusiasm for the outfits (Cynthia, personal interview, 6 April 2006, Catherine, personal interview, 17 April 2006, Nairobi).

Chapter 5:

Clothed Bodies, Clothing Systems and Swahili Consumption

Dress is among the most conspicuous identity markers. In coastal East Africa clothing has provided immediate and important information on the status, class, and ethnicity of its wearers¹ (Prestholdt 1998, 2006; Fair 2001, 2004). Given its capacity for capriciousness – as expressed in the fleeting temporality of the term “fashion” – dress is similarly flexible, fluid, and performative, offering its wearer myriad opportunities to publicly declare particular affinities (Tarlo 1996, McRobbie 1997, Entwistle 2000). While the literal and figurative superficiality of clothing is evident, each garment is nevertheless embedded in a series of political, economic, and cultural systems – from its design conception to the sourcing of materials for its production, to its manufacture, distribution, taxation, advertisement, consumption, and, in some cases, recasting as secondhand garment (Hansen 2000, Dwyer and Crang 2002, Dwyer and Jackson 2003, Dwyer 2004).

Having suggested the ways in which multiple apparel systems were and continue to be generated in Kenya through a focus on historical and contemporary policies at the state and

¹ As historian Jeremy Prestholdt suggests in his research on the importance of apparel to Swahili, in particular, “material consumption was both integrative and empowering...Cloth consumption engaged the whole of Swahili society in a culturally reproductive process and acted as an instantly recognizable sign of the communality of much of the East African coast...Power in Swahili society could be contested through consumption of materials, and although group boundaries were fixed, they were not impermeable, as shown by the fact that those with access to foreign and regional [cloth] markets were able to rise in rank” (1998:56).

regional level (in the colonial period, since Kenyan independence, and throughout various East African regional formulations) and the intersection of national and regional policies at various scales within the international trade regime and preferential trade agreements, including AGOA (see Chapter 2 through 4), I turn here to a focus on everyday practices of fashion. This analysis of clothing consumption is attentive to multiple culturally constituted meanings of clothing in Kenya. As expressed by research participants, these sentiments are shown to intersect with the organization and execution of these international apparel systems.

In this chapter, I detail consumer practices surrounding Muslim/vernacular fashions, secondhand clothing, and the recent availability of new apparel or “Dubai clothes” (see Chapter 5) within and in relation to Kenya’s Swahili community. In the process, I address the context of recent trends in Muslim fashion among the Swahili – from the cessation of local manufacture of vernacular Swahili styles, to trade liberalization, transformations in popular culture, consumption landscapes, and concurrent changes in perceptions of the wider region in which the East African coast is physically, culturally, spiritually, and economically situated. By focusing attention on individual bodily practices (and their foundation in particular socio-economic communities), I aim to rescale the macroprocesses of the previous chapters and their emphases on historical and contemporary global, regional and state apparel policies. In “scaling down,” I am interested in the mutually constitutive ways in which taste, fashion, and culturally meaningful patterns of Swahili consumption intersect “global” apparel systems.

In this discussion of Swahili clothing, I give attention to issues of identity formation (particularly Islamic, gendered, and classed) and their intersection with international systems of apparel through a focus on consumers. Women have been the primary focus of academic, political, and popular narratives concerning Islam and clothing more generally, particularly

regarding debates over the politics of veiling (El Guindi 1999, Secor 2002, 2004, Gökariksel 2003, Gökariksel and Mitchell 2005). Attention to the attire (and clothing consumption practices) of Muslim men has been, by contrast, much more circumscribed (Hansen 2002:382).

With respect to Swahili women's construction of new individual and collective identities in early 20th century Zanzibar through the adoption of new clothing styles, Fair describes the comparatively more restricted dress of Swahili men at the time as typically including "a long, white, loose-fitting gown, known as *kanzu*, and a sewn cap, known as *kofia*" (2004:16). Contemporary Swahili men, by contrast, appropriate a wide-variety of styles - "traditional" Swahili, Omani, Emirati, Saudi, Sudanese, or other *kanzu*; *kofia* from the Kenyan coast, Oman, or elsewhere; *kikoi* or *surwali* (loose trousers) worn alone as a leg covering or under *kanzu*; Western-style jeans, trousers, shirts, and suits; or an assemblage combining various options. This multitude of possibilities reflects, in part, neoliberal shifts occurring in Kenya since the early 1990s and their consequent sartorial effects.

A pervasive feature of the neoliberal economic/development policies enacted by Kenya and expressed most explicitly in the creation of Export Processing Zones, has been the willingness on the part of the state to forgo services to the domestic population. This is certainly not specific to Kenya and, rather, is understood as a recurring aspect of the project of neoliberalism² (Peet and Hartwick 1999, Hart 2000, Nef and Robles 2000, Brenner and Theodore 2002, Ferguson and Gupta 2002, Jessop 2002, Tickell and Peck 2002, Larner 2003, Watts 2003, Peck 2004). Where the African, and in this case, Kenyan example is of interest, particularly with

² Here I understand neoliberalism to refer to an assemblage of ideological, economic, and social transformations, often imposed through agreements with donor agencies including the IMF and World Bank, and stipulated in conjunction with membership in the WTO, requiring an "opening up" of economies and economic institutions to the vagaries of free markets, coupled with less government "intervention" in the provision of social services including health care, education, and housing; while concurrently shifting these and other socio-economic responsibilities to the "private sector" or citizenry.

respect to textiles and clothing, is the wholesale shift away from policies that provide (even obliquely) for domestic consumers,³ including, in this case, garments. Investments, tax incentives, and infrastructure to encourage the manufacture of clothing has shifted away from production of apparel for Kenyans and, in the process, has further depleted the social and economic resources available to the domestic population – from diverted investment streams targeting exporting enclaves, to policies which explicitly marginalize large swathes of the population (see Pickles and Begg 2000 for their study of the intersections of neoliberal policies of apparel for export with an historically marginalized community of Muslims in Bulgaria). As the representative of the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) textiles and apparel division commented in response to my question regarding the effects of secondhand clothing on apparel production, “We [manufacturers] are not worried about secondhand clothing [*mitumba*]. *Mitumba* is for Kenyans and we’re not interested in Kenyan consumers.” (Paul Opiyo, personal interview, 26 February 2006). Given the focus of this project in assessing the varying roles and potentialities of textiles and clothing in the economic development and cultural imaginaries of Kenyans, this shift toward consumption is necessary in providing scalar linkages between the various projects of apparel and the mutually constitutive role of consumers in its formation.

In this discussion, I utilize responses obtained through semi-structured interviews with women and men consumers, retailers, and clothing wholesalers; print and electronic media

³ I acknowledge that “providing services” to local populations is generally understood to entail what are seen as essential services for basic (and one hopes, more than minimum) quality of life concerns, chief among these being health care, education, access to clean water and sanitation, and housing, particularly, thus lumping the availability of multiple clothing options within this framework may seem somewhat frivolous. I nevertheless contend that the Kenyan state’s unwillingness to support either domestic manufacture of garments, on the one hand (through capital investment, tax breaks, etc.), or to formalize the importation of affordable new clothing (via regulation that ensured custom’s oversight of shipments and, in this way, offered some protection for local small scale manufacturers), has resulted in a situation whereby secondhand clothing, only recently supplemented by small-scale trading in new garments, is the only feasible option for Kenyan consumers and thus further contributes to the persistent dissolution of domestic alternatives.

(including newspaper articles, radio, and television broadcasts); and an emphasis on the materiality of the clothing itself⁴. If the research participants here are representative, it is, perhaps, in their heterogeneous perceptions of Swahili clothing and the various ways in which these fashions are understood. Despite this multiplicity, my analysis draws from several themes that emerged and re-emerged over the course of these conversations: specifically the subjects own gendered and Muslim understandings of dress, and the clothing they choose to meet these perceived imperatives; and the historical and contemporary connections Swahili have to other Muslims elsewhere in the world, particularly in Arabia. A pervasive subtext evolved indicating the contested place of the Swahili community (particularly, and Muslims in general) within Kenya and the manner by which two strategies offer possibilities to position and re-position Swahili.

In the first account, Swahili research participants draw upon long-standing interactions and links with Asia, particularly the Arabian Peninsula, to detail the cultural importance of a shared legacy of Islam and extensive family ties binding the regions. This framing places Swahili women and men, who express their faith through dress, at odds with a Kenyan government waging a U.S.-backed “war on terror” in which Muslim men, particularly, are viewed with suspicion. The second narrative, by contrast, focuses on the rapid repositioning of Kenya’s economic future as increasingly intertwined with Asia⁵. Here, the booming economy of Dubai, in

⁴ The material for this chapter is drawn from 25 semi-structured interviews conducted in Kenya (Nairobi and Mombasa) – of which 15 are with men and 10 are with women - all are Kenyan citizens, and all but two are Muslim. Unlike the wider project, in which interview participants were selected to provide a cross-section of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, and occupational specialization so as to offer multiple perspectives on the manufacturing, trade, and consumption of cloth and clothing, here I have selected a sub-group from sixty-five (65) total interviews not for the representative sample they provide, but rather due to the ways in which these conversations specifically address the subjects’ perspectives and experiences regarding clothing and Islam.

⁵ For the apparel consumers interviewed in this study (some of whom include shop keepers and others involved in the garment business), Asia also occupies a conflicting role as, on the one hand, a beacon of desires and economic

particular, offers Kenya a nearby trading partner of growing importance. Swahili ties with Arabia that may be perceived as disadvantageous with respect to the common practice of Islam are, in the first instance, inverted to offer Swahili entrée into the lucrative economic possibilities with which Dubai is associated⁶. Both of these seemingly antithetical positions circulate, in part, around textiles and clothing.

Situating dress as practice, materiality, commodity

In presenting my theoretical framework, I begin with scholars who approach clothing as symbolic and embodied cultural and social expressions. While these approaches are rich in social imaginary and evocative of cultural meanings, for the most part, they ignore the economic practices associated with the production, distribution, and consumption of garments (though Hansen's work on secondhand clothing in Zambia is a notable exception (1995, 1999, 2000)⁷. I subsequently turn to a presentation of garments as commodities in an effort to link corporeal practices of fashion with apparel systems. This latter approach underscores the importance of clothing with respect to its production and circulation (and in the case of *mitumba*, its recirculation). Following a discussion of commodity chain approaches, I turn to the ways in which clothing and other commodities have been engaged analytically through new economic geographies. The expansiveness of new economic geographies provides the conceptual basis for

and postcolonial possibilities. In the case of China, its positive attributes are tempered by criticisms of its "cheap" products and by its perceived role in undermining local apparel economies (see Chapter 7).

⁶ I address these trade links with Dubai in Chapter 5.

⁷ Karen Hansen's extensive research on *salaula* or secondhand clothing in Zambia emerged through a series of local engagements with the gendered nature of Zambian cultural processes, local transformations effected by Zambians in their consumption of *salaula* and the multiple modernities their consumption reflects (1995, 1999). She has subsequently turned to a more thorough engagement with the global circuitry of secondhand clothes (2000).

my interest in conjoining the corporeal and imaginary experience of garments with the materiality of international clothing systems.

An expanding literature on dress emphasizes the communicative potential of clothing – the symbolic codes embedded in its appearance and the ways in which this appearance is constructed by the wearer and perceived by others (Barnes and Eicher 1992, Eicher 1995, Hendrickson 1995). For the anthropologist Mary Douglas, the intimacy between body and clothing is part of a “social imagery” [sic.] contributing to the construction of socio-corporeal identities and group boundaries (1970). Dress as a liminal zone touches the body and faces outward toward others, creating a “social skin” (Turner 1993 [1980]) mediating between individual and collective experiences. The choice of dress is neither a simple matter of self-expression nor an individual articulation of “sartorial ecumene” (Mustafa 1998). Rather, dress must be understood as acquiring its meaning and practice through the historical, economic, and social conditions of its production. These ideas come together in understandings of situated bodily practice.

Drawing from a series of theoretical interventions emerging in the 1970s explicitly highlighting the body (Merleau-Ponty [1945] 2002, 1964, Douglas 1970, Mauss 1973, Foucault 1977), situated practice recognizes that bodies are socially constructed, always present in cultural context, and the outcome of individual practices (Entwistle 2000). For Douglas (1970) and Mauss (1973), the body is a natural object shaped by the social forces of culture and imbued with symbolic potential (for Douglas) and characterized by movement or attempts at mastering ‘techniques of the body’ (in the work of Mauss). For Foucault, the body is the object seized upon by the interdependency of power/knowledge (1980). Central to Foucault’s approach is the importance of discourses or regimes of knowledge that determine possibilities for thinking,

speaking, and acting ‘truth’ at any given time. As the body itself has been historicized and inscribed with power/knowledge (Foucault 1977, Grosz 1994, Bordo 1995), dress similarly takes shape through its embattled genealogies.

While these theoretical contributions to understandings of the body have opened new lines of inquiry, they nevertheless fall short in detailing the physicality of bodies in space. This emphasis on embodiment - with its shift away from a semiotic/textualist framework - emerges from an engagement with the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty. The place of our body in the world is a central concern for Merleau-Ponty’s analysis of perception and lived experience and one that resonates with geographical concerns of spatiality (as well as temporality). In his understanding “our bodies are what give us expression in the world, the visible form of our intentions” and thus “it is through our bodies that we come to be seen in the world” (in Entwistle 2000:29). Bourdieu offers a sociological approach to embodiment grounding the philosophical insights of phenomenology with the empirics of practice (1989). *Habitus*, as a “system of durable, transposable dispositions” produced by the particular conditions of a class grouping, links individuals with social structures through, in part, our class position (1994:95). It is through this linking of individuals and collectivities by *habitus* that Bourdieu’s embodiment offers an active analysis of the body. For Entwistle,

the way we come to live in our bodies is structured by our social position in the world but these structures are reproduced only through the embodied actions of individuals...Dress in everyday life is a practical negotiation between the fashion system as a structured system, the social conditions of everyday life such as class, gender, and the like as well as the ‘rules’ or norms governing particular social situations. The outcome of this complex interaction cannot be known in advance precisely because the *habitus* will improvise and adapt to these conditions. The notion of the *habitus* as a durable and transposable set of dispositions allows some sense of agency: it enables us to talk about dress as a personal attempt to orientate ourselves to particular circumstances and thus recognizes the structuring influences of the social world on the one hand, and the agency of individuals who make choices as to what to wear on the other. (2000:36-37)

For this analysis of Swahili dress, its mutability, and the ways in which bodies are situated in evolving and variegated sites of tension over Islamic identity and access to capital expansion, Bourdieu's conception of embodiment is particularly useful in both its attentiveness to individual and social linkages enacted through situated bodily practice and its grounding in economic strictures. Embodiment in this sense is likewise expansive enough to include gender and religious identities as analytics while situated in tandem with the apparel systems of this study.

In Muslim communities, as elsewhere, clothing animates discussions and debates on gender, identity, modesty, and modernity (Dwyer, 1999, White 1999, Secor 2002, 2005; Gökariksel 2003). To this end, women's dress⁸, particularly interpretations of "the veil," forms the bulk of contemporary research on clothing and Islam. Readings of veiling (covering the hair, the face, and/or bodily form) centering on the practice as both complicit in and visually symbolizing women's oppression sustain an Orientalist fascination with exoticism and sensationalism. Recent scholarly attention has widened veil debates to emphasize both women's agency in veiling (and not veiling) and the cultural, political, and economic contexts within which these decisions are made (El Guindi 1999, Secor 2002, 2005, Gökariksel 2003).

The cosmopolitan and political impetus to veiling provides a focal point for El Guindi's study of contemporary Egypt, reframing *hijab* as both object and tangible symbol of a new Islamic urban consciousness (1999). Central to this "new" veiling, and its attraction for middle and upper class women, is the creation of a 'sacred space' surrounding the bodies of women even as they engage in worldly activities (1999). While Secor's point of departure is a similar

⁸ Dress, referring to clothing and assemblages of all bodily adornments, is the preferred term with respect to anthropological approaches to fashion (Eicher & Roach-Higgins 1992, Hansen 2004). Though I continue using the terms cloth/clothing and dress interchangeably, I share Hansen's concern with inclusivity and a desire to avoid the ambiguities inherent in the distinctions between cloth, folded and wrapped, and the associated clothing created by these acts (2002:371).

understanding of veiled women's "preservation of sanctity beyond the home," she emphasizes a relational understanding of space to show "how veiling as a form of dress is a spatial practice that gains its significance through women's urban mobility and their construction of Islamic understandings in the city" (2002:6). The socio-spatial experience of veiling is understood by Secor to be composed of "regimes of veiling" (8) produced by context-specific geographies of power. Secor's spatializing intervention is critical for its focus on veiling as embodied practice. In this approach, dress is not surface adornment that threatens erasure of the body beneath (as suggested by El Guindi 1999), but instead expresses a mobile, sartorial politics (Secor 2002, 2005).

Tensions between veiling and the state (in France, Turkey, and elsewhere) have prompted considerations of the politics of Islamism, secularism, and global neoliberalism (Bowen 2004, 2007; Gökariksel and Mitchell 2005). In these works, veiling is viewed in the context of state formation and economic development, particularly the tandem modernist projects of secularism and the creation of neoliberal subjects, juxtaposed with the "sticky particularities of religion and other place-based ascriptions" associated with women who veil⁹ (Gökariksel and Mitchell 2005:159). Modernity, Islam, and the veil are taken up by numerous authors (Abu-Lughod 1990, Ong 1990, Fuglesang 1992, Brenner 1996, Gökariksel 2003) concerned with the local fashioning of what it means to be modern, Muslim, and a woman in a variety of geographical contexts. Here again the relationship between the state and women's bodies is highly contested terrain with women viewed as the locus of social reproduction in the sense of both bearing future citizens and in fashioning a particular visual identity (modern, modest, etc.) through clothing.

⁹ For Swahili women, the very term used to denote the face veil – *ninja* – immediately conjures both a reworking of African-Asian cultural dynamics and a fierce opposition to popular images of veiled women as oppressed, meek, and/or downtrodden.

Despite the importance of this research, it upholds a striking imbalance. Women remain the focus of fashion and Islam, “even though socioeconomic changes and Islamic revival have changed Muslim men’s dress as well” (Hansen 2002:382). In her review of research on clothing and apparel, Hansen laments the absence of attention to Muslim men and fashion, noting that normative and pervasive gendered perceptions of dress tend to confine research to women (not only within Muslim communities but globally), thus perpetuating this anomaly (ibid.). This research takes up this call with a particular focus on Swahili men.

Bodies as gendered and “Muslim,” are among the understandings the research participants bring to their choice of dress. Clothing is, likewise, a commodity, and the interviewees detail the ways in which the values associated with commodities are expressed via consumption. As expansively defined by Michael Watts, commodities are understood

[a]s tangible, physical things – as the embodiment of particular uses and values – commodities have lives, or biographies. They are made, born or fabricated; they are fashioned and differentiated in a variety of ways; they are sold, retailed, advertised and ultimately consumed or ‘realized’ (and perhaps even recycled!). The life of the commodity typically involves movement through space and time, during which it adds values and meanings of various forms. Commodities are therefore pre-eminently geographical objects. (1999:309)

This approach to commodities signals the shifts that underlay the (re)emergence¹⁰ of the concept as an important analytical focus beginning with the work of Appadurai (1986) and intersecting a number of disciplinary fields including sociology and geography (Gereffi 1994, Gereffi and Korzeniewicz 1994, Cook and Crang 1996). Global Commodity Chain (and more recently, Global Value Chain) research offers a particularly systematic and accessible example of these recent approaches to commodities (see Chapter 1 for a discussion of the producer and buyer driven GCC organization and the five models of governance associated with GVC

¹⁰ Commodities, and particularly the idea of “commodity fetish” are most notably associated with Marx who conceived of commodities as “an embodiment of both use value and exchange value” (in Harvey 1982:7).

research), and one often utilized for apparel research, though its epistemological bases have generated a number of critiques (see Leslie and Reimer 1999, Smith et al. 2002).

Global commodity and value chain research (Gereffi 1994, Gereffi and Korzeniewicz 1994, Gereffi et al. 2001; Bair and Gereffi 2003, Bair 2005; Gibbon 2001, 2003) provides a firm level focus attentive to the linking of geographical scales from global to regional/local and, in the process, highlights the ways in which uneven development is produced, particularly, at a global scale. Its restricted rubric has been criticized for its linearity (Leslie and Reimer 1999, Hughes 2000), its inattention to issues of the state (Smith et al. 2002) and its lack of an explicit engagement with consumer patterns (Cook et al. 1999), other than the “buyer-driven” strategies of corporate retail “consumers” (see Gereffi 1994 and 1999 regarding the role of US retailers in global commodity chains; significant exceptions to this relative lack of a consumer focus include Guthman’s research on the consumption of organic agricultural products 2003, 2004)¹¹. Missing from these seemingly dichotomous¹² approaches is an explicit attentiveness to both the cultural specificity of meaning, bodily practices of clothing, and socially significant frameworks for consumption, on the one hand, and the potentially fruitful intersections of these meanings with the political economies of apparel.

Geographical research attentive to cultural economies – specifically various symbolic and corporeal understandings of fashion and its meanings with respect to political economy - is

¹¹ GCC and GVC analyses have been similarly criticized for inattentiveness to issues of labor and environment, however recent work has begun to address these significant shortcomings (Pickles 2002, Goodman 2004).

¹² While these two areas of focus suggest a distinct and oppositional approach to textiles and apparel (and other substantive matters both “cultural” and “economic”), “that culture and economy might be related is viewed with suspicion only by die-hard formalists in economics.” (Amin with Thrift 2007:143). The authors continue, noting “the vast majority of those who practice economics in and beyond the dismal science readily acknowledge that economic life, from the act of producing and exchanging goods to that of accumulating wealth and satisfying needs, is related to culture, however defined.” (ibid.).

increasingly generated through the analytic of consumption¹³. The variety of empirical studies produced within the “consumption” rubric now includes, for example, studies of food (Valentine 2002, Guthman 2003, 2004, Domosh 2003, Kalra 2004), secondhand markets (Gregson et al. 2000, Gregson and Crewe 2003), and fashion (Dwyer and Crang 2002, Dwyer 2003, Dwyer and Jackson 2003, Leslie 2002, Raghuram 2004). As Goss suggests, “much of this [consumption] research follows upon the so-called ‘cultural turn’¹⁴ as geographers have traced creativity, aesthetic practices and the making of meaning, from consumption into the realm of production, there revealing the mutual ‘entanglement of commerce and culture’” (2004:370, see also 2006)¹⁵.

With respect to clothing, Leslie is attentive to the ways in which retail employees consume and model the fashion products they sell (2002). More useful for this project, Dwyer and various collaborators (with Crang 2002, and Jackson 2003, and both in 2003), explore the meanings of fashion with a focus on transnationalism. Dwyer and Crang (2002) interrogate the intersections of “hybrid commodity cultures” and the production and consumption of Indian fashion. In an extension of this study, Dwyer and Jackson examine cultural intermediaries and their role in ‘fashioning’ the meanings of Indian garments as, varyingly, exotic, ethical, individual, and original (2003). Through a focus on clothing company histories and business

¹³ In turning to consumption, I do not wish to denigrate the critical component of production in the international clothing systems of my focus. In only one of the four “systems” (apparel for export) is production taking place in Kenya, however. Given this situation, and my focus on the intersections of these four systems, I do not offer a focus on production.

¹⁴ Having undergone a “cultural turn,” scholars working within the flexible frameworks of ‘new’ economic geographies reject the notion of conventional dualisms dividing “the cultural” and “the economic” (Thrift and Olds 1996, Crang 1997, Massey 1997, Sayer 1997, Amin and Thrift 2004, 2007). Their multiple approaches emphasize fluid, hybrid conceptions sensitive to mutual constitutions and the fundamental inseparability of these two “spheres” (James 2006: 289).

¹⁵ As the inclusion of the phrase “so-called” in this quote suggests, Goss is skeptical of the “newness” claims to current commodity research (and, by extension, ‘new’ economic geographies more generally), noting the risk of presenting, in the guise of novelty, “a hollowed out version of Marxist commodity fetishism” (Lodziak 2002) and/or legitimizing commodity culture and serving thereby as apologists for liberal capitalist markets (Warde 2002, quoted in Goss 2004:371). These critiques are not taken up further here, but noted as possible and problematic pitfalls.

practice transnationalism, the authors explore complexity with regard to a) transnational connections between Britain and the Indian subcontinent, b) the ways in which “production is managed across transnational space” and c) “trajectories of transnationality involved in the manufacture of goods which are marked as ‘transnational’” (Crang et al. 2003:449-450). While their call to ‘ground’ the concept of transnationalism through attention to “commodity culture” is appealing, I engage this focus with the following differences.

The prolific work of Dwyer et al. (including her earlier and important studies of women and Muslim identities in Britain – 1997, 1999) is firmly situated in the ‘transnational spaces’ of British and Indian firms, commodity design and marketing, and the imaginaries conjured through these processes and with respect to their consumption in England. The consumers they take as their focus are British. While the products of this engagement are fruitful, I am nevertheless interested in displacing the North-South relationships represented in these connections with a spatiality that reflects the South-South networks (material, social, spiritual) voiced by the Swahili participants in this project. I likewise emphasize the relatively underrepresented self-presentations of African fashion consumers in the geographical literature, suggest the ways in which these ‘consumer commodity’ practices are predicated on understandings of gendered, religious, and transnational identities, and rework these narratives through the multiple international clothing systems operating in Kenya. I consider these embodied practices of consumption and the acts of clothing bodies understood as gendered and Muslim at their intersection with state interventions (or their absences) in apparel manufacturing and trade.

Swahili Men’s Fashions

The constitution of coastal East Africans as a community with a distinct ethnicity – Swahili – has been a problem of categorization animating academic scholarship and befuddling government policy makers¹⁶ through the present, though most “Swahili” themselves are considerably less troubled by a lack of consensus (Allen 1993, Eastman 1971, Horton and Middleton 2000, Middleton 1992, Prins 1967). Recent publications have sought to put to rest the dualistic debate, which has largely centered on whether the Swahili are “Arab” or “African,” by historicizing the development of Swahili communities as necessarily constituted differently, at different times, and with different socio-political effects. Acknowledgement of the social construction of Swahili identity, and its mutability, have emerged, in part, within an academic milieu in which essentialist notions of identity are rejected in favor of an understanding of identities as fluid and performative. For Swahili themselves, this fluidity has been a remarkable constant in their communities. This inclusive, situated, understanding of identity reflects the diversity and tolerance characteristic of the coast. With this in mind, I understand Swahili to denote a population of Kiswahili speaking Muslims of diverse origins linked by a shared cultural repertoire. This approach both rejects essentializing, either/or dichotomies of “African” or “Arab,” while at the same time taking its lead from the community itself whose members blur

¹⁶ Census categories offer insight into the remarkable history of the ethnic designation “Swahili” in Kenya and the framing and re-framing of the term by successive governments, both colonial and post-independence. The British census of Mombasa in 1897 indicates that many residents identified as “Free Swahili,” suggesting that others recognized as Swahili were slaves. Cooper notes that many of those recorded as “Swahili” in the British census of 1924 were emancipated slaves (1980). The British colonial authorities had repeatedly classified Swahili as Africans until the 1950s when they were officially reclassified as “Arabs” (Porter 1992:46). At independence, to identify as Swahili, and therefore to be associated with Arabs, was not politically savvy (*ibid.*). Personal reluctance to become “Swahili” at independence was coupled with government policies problematizing the adoption of Swahili as an ethnic category. Indeed, Kenya’s post-colonial governments have not recognized Swahili as an ethnic group. At independence, Kiswahili was adopted as an official language in Kenya precisely for its presumed value as a language disassociated from a particular ethnic group, thus preventing possible inter-ethnic linguistic rivalries (Whiteley 1969). At present, Swahili is not one of the recognized ethnic categories available in registering the birth of a new baby. “Swahili/Shirazi” was a category in the 1989 census but only 1.6% of Kenyans claimed this ethnicity (Porter 1992).

these lines in everyday life. This situatedness of identity, and its performance, relies in large part on the visual dialogue of clothing.

Swahili are associated with several distinct styles of dress which, while emerging from the particular cultural setting provided by East Africa, nevertheless share considerable commonality with clothing worn in the Gulf region, particularly, and with fellow Muslims worldwide. For women, clothing most often consists of loose gowns of synthetic or cotton fabric (known varyingly as *kanzu*, *gauni*, *direh*, or *jalabiya*¹⁷) worn with the addition of *leso*¹⁸ (or *khanga*) at home and in prayer, for added coverage. *Buibui*¹⁹ with *hijab* and increasingly *niqab* (known colloquially as *ninja*) are worn in public.

While Swahili women's normative public dress is currently defined by *buibui* and *hijab*²⁰. Swahili men have multiple options when it comes to their self-presentations. Trousers, jeans, shirts, jackets, and suits, both new and secondhand, are widely available and commonly worn. These clothes do not, however, distinguish the wearer as Muslim. By contrast, the dress distinctive of Swahili men, including *kanzu*, *kikoi*, and *kofia*, is associated with Islam and shares some similarities with garments worn by fellow Muslims in other areas of Africa, the Middle East, and elsewhere in Asia. *Kanzu* (the word is also used above to indicate a woman's dress),

¹⁷ The name used for a woman's dress may indicate where it was purchased. If the garment was bought in a Somali market (for example, within Eastleigh Estate in Nairobi), the Somali term *direh* is most common. *Jalabiya* is used throughout the Gulf and suggests either purchase in these abroad or in shops in Mombasa that directly import from Dubai, particularly.

¹⁸ *Leso* are rectangular cotton cloths in bright colors, sold as a single long piece to be cut and hemmed to form an identical pair, with a four-sided border, various designs, and a boxed Swahili text in the lower third of the garment.

¹⁹ *Buibui*, like (Persian) Gulf *abaya*, are black cloaks of synthetic material worn over a woman's clothing when outside one's home.

²⁰ These are taken to be broad categories, however, as subtle distinctions are evident in the styles of *buibui* and *hijab* (the weight of the fabric, the type of closure, the addition of bead work or other adornment) and the choice to wear (or not wear) the face veil or *ninja*.

have long sleeves, a large opening at the neck with a button or snap closure, and fall to the wearer's ankles. They are made of both cotton and cotton blends – wholly synthetic *kanzu*, unlike *buibui*, are quite rare²¹. Most often white, they are nevertheless available in a range of muted colors, from light lavender to grey and various shades of brown.

Regardless of the color, *kanzu* must be scrupulously clean when worn, whether for work, prayer, or relaxation²². Under *kanzu*, men wear undershirts and either loose cotton trousers, sometimes ending at or just below the knee, or a cotton or rayon wrap called *kikoi*. *Kikoi* are similar to waist wrapped garments worn by men in Indonesia (*sarung*), in Yemen (*futa*) and elsewhere in parts of the Muslim world (including Somalia and Oman) (Alpers 1983). *Kikoi* available for purchase in Mombasa and Nairobi are of three dominant styles: Indonesian *sarungi* of rayon, which are sewn together to form a tube that is then folded around the body at the waist; rectangular Swahili-style *kikoi*, machine made in India or hand-woven of cotton, with a fringe on each short end; and less frequently, large, hand-woven, heavy cotton *kikoi* or *banadir*, named for

²¹ As is also true for gold, several hadith (collections of sayings and acts by Muhammed) ban the wearing of silk (*hariri* in Kiswahili) for Muslim men. Swahili often use the word *hariri* to designate not only true silk but silky fabrics (including nylon and polyester). According to one interviewee, this is a likely explanation for the persistence of cotton *kanzu* (Said, personal interview 6 June 2006, Mombasa).

²² Cleanliness is a critical component of Islam and one that characterizes certain aspects of dress, specifically. For Swahili men, issues surrounding cleanliness animate debates as to the proper *kanzu* length – whether the hem should rise well above or below the ankle. According to Islamic scholars in Kenya interviewed for this research, the *kanzu* hem should fall mid-calf – a length I've rarely seen in everyday life – to avoid soiling the fabric on the street. For women, this issue emerged in interviews in a discussion of Somali clothing. Somali women in Nairobi and Mombasa are distinctive for their *garbassar*, a dark, heavy shawl covering women from their head, snugly fastened around their face, and falling to the ground. When I noted the piety I imagined such modest coverings might suggest, I was quickly challenged by several interviewees who noted that the length of their garments, and the wearer's inability to keep the hem from dragging on the ground, suggested, instead, a complete lack of regard for cleanliness, and by extension, Islam. These comments may prove most valuable in what they reflect of the tensions that at times surface between Swahili and Somali communities in Kenya.

the area of Somali where the garments were made into the 1990s²³ (Moiz, personal interview, 28 May 2006 Mombasa). I discuss new *kikoi* practices, below.

Whether wearing *kanzu*, *kikoi*, or jeans and a t-shirt, Swahili men may wear an embroidered cap, or *kofia*, although this item is only required for prayer (Fig. 25). I often noted, for instance, young men in jeans and trousers with *kofia* in hand hurrying to the mosque on Friday afternoons in Nairobi. When I asked one man sitting beside me on a *matatu* (minibus) why he was carrying rather than wearing his *kofia*, he looked at me sheepishly and shrugged. While *kofia* are not always worn with “western” clothing, they are always paired with *kanzu*, according to the research participants²⁴.

²³ I interviewed the proprietor, Moiz Kitabwalla, of the longest-established *duka* or shop selling *kikoi* and *kanzu* in Mombasa (Duka la Kitabwalla, Biashara Street). This shop is the only source of banadir currently in Mombasa (according to both Moiz and other interviewees). According to Moiz, members of the Barawa ethnic group in Somalia wove *banadir kikoi* (Barawa is a town in Somalia and has been viewed as comprising the northernmost coastal community of Swahili, historically – see Prestholdt 1998:12). The chaos following the dissolution of the Somali government in 1991 brought an end to the trade and many younger men are consequently unfamiliar with the garment. He has not had any merchants coming to his shop to sell banadir since the late 1990s. The stock he was selling in 2006 was leftover from that period. (Moiz Kitabwalla, personal interview, 28 May 2006).

²⁴ In Dubai, young Emirati men who wear the equivalent of the Swahili *kanzu* (known locally as *dishdasha*) combined this look in 2006 with designer “trucker caps” – baseball style caps with a fabric front and often mesh backs and sides sporting stylish brand names including “Von Dutch” – for a wonderful hipster hybrid. Among Swahili, however, a proper *kofia* is de rigueur.



Fig. 25. *Kofia*, souq al Moutrah, Muscat, Oman (August 2006).

Kofia styles are both regional and distinctly classed, which is reflected in the wide disparity in their pricing. While Zanzibari and Omani-styles²⁵ are commonly worn, knit *kofia* (similar or identical to *thagiya* in Saudi Arabia, where they are worn under white head-coverings or *gutra*) are increasingly available, and even red fezzes or *tarboush* are present in local shops (though seldom seen in active use). Handmade, indigenous Swahili *kofia* of the Lamu archipelago of the northern Kenyan coast boast the best quality and most attractive designs (according to those interviewed), and highest prices.²⁶ Taken together, these styles form a particular sartorial regime of the Swahili male that contribute to an individual's projected identity on any given day, in any given social setting.

²⁵ Attesting, perhaps, to their importance as iconography, I purchased gift-wrapping paper featuring an assemblage of *kofia* designs in a shop in Nizwa, Oman, during this fieldwork.

²⁶ Whereas the least expensive *kofia* (either knit or sewn) may cost 200-300 Ksh minimum (\$2.50-\$3.75 USD at 80 Ksh = 1 USD), *kofia* from the Lamu archipelago may cost upwards of 5000 Ksh (\$62.50 USD).

In my discussions and interviews with Swahili regarding clothing, older informants sought - first and foremost - to historicize their dress, offering examples and descriptions of what was once worn. In some cases, as in an interview I conducted with an older Swahili man (in his late 60s) originally from the coast near Lamu but now residing in Nairobi, this history was projected as far back into the past as the 19th century. In this narrative, even his earliest descriptions of Swahili clothing were understood as transnational:

In the far past the Bajuni [Swahili from the Lamu archipelago, bordering Somalia] had their own clothes...called *misare*. *Misare* are sheets of cloth, which used to be worn over the shoulders. There were also *kikoi* named *banadir*. Banadir is a region in Somalia. Both *kikoi* and *misare* came from Banadir, Unguja and Singapore. Thus, a typical man would wear a *banadir kikoi* on the bottom, wrap *msare*[sing.] from Unguja covering one shoulder and leave the other open.

[My grandfather] used to wear *kikoi* and a long shirt. He also put on *kanzu*. *Kanzu* used to be known by their color like, for instance, ‘*kanzu ya hudhurungi*’ [green], or known by the type of material used to make the *kanzu* like ‘*kanzu ya lasi*’ [satin] and *kofia* [embroidered cap worn by Swahili men]. All Swahili- or Bajuni-made *kofia* have names. Old names include *kulabu*, *kopa*, *pini*, *kibao cha mpiara*. New *kofia* designs are called *jani*, *zulia*, *couch*, and *ijasi*. *Kofia* names are determined by their stitching patterns...Omani *kofia* have no names. They [Omanis] truly love our *kofia*. Omanis of personality always wear our [Swahili] *kofia* and not theirs. (Ahmed, personal interview 3 April 2006, Nairobi)

Older East African men have long been associated with the wearing of *kanzu*, even as younger generations sought to distance themselves from this look. Summing up a common observation in late 1960s Tanzania, Hino reports that although “[m]iddle-aged and older men of Ujiji generally wear the costume called *kanzu*...the majority of younger men generally dress themselves in western style clothes” (1968:100-111). The older research participants in this study all wore *kanzu* with some regularity (in several cases daily, while others donned theirs at least several times a week and always on Fridays) and expressed their decision to wear (or not wear) *kanzu* as based on a sense of their obligations that day, the level of comfort they desired (the garments were described as particularly cool in warm weather), and with whom they would likely be spending time. “You see, we are not like Omanis,” said one Mombasa-based

interviewee who traveled frequently between the two places, “they are always in *kanzu*, always, and always in *kikoi*. They know how best to dress for Islam. They are committed. We Kenyans have been corrupted. But their *kofia* cannot be compared. They have lost the art. While here things are not what they once were, still our *kofia* are prized even in Oman!” (Said, personal interview, 6 June 2006, Mombasa). Shops selling the garments are, unsurprisingly, concentrated in predominantly Muslim areas of Nairobi (especially in Eastleigh, although the majority Somali community of the estate do not wear the garment), and in Mombasa.

For younger men, wearing *kanzu* was expressed in interviews as, varyingly, a weekly obligation for Friday prayers, or, when worn with greater frequency, as a way of expressing their pride in their identity and their devotion to Islam. This choice was not without its ramifications. One young Muslim woman, a college student in Nairobi originally from Mombasa who herself wears *hijab* but not *niqab*, described a dress ban at her private (or parallel) college *not* for young women but rather, for young Muslim men. “They [fellow Muslim male students] were told ‘you cannot come here wearing your pajamas! That is not allowed in the classrooms!’ We were very upset by this news and very sad for them. Their language – pajamas! – was so offensive.” (Ashura, personal interview, 20 May 2006, Mombasa).



Fig. 26. Young Swahili men in *kanzu* and *kofia*, Mombasa (April 2002)
photo credit: Thomas Mangieri

Due to their immediate association with Islam, *kanzu*-wearers at times bear the brunt of ignorance and condemnation, as the banning above suggests. More publicly, in the “humor” column “Men Only” in Kenya’s *Sunday Standard*, Tony Mochama conflated Islamic dress for men with impending terrorist attack in the following “advice” for travelers: “Check out the person next to you. Is he bearded, muttering from some holy book, and has wires sticking out of his ‘kanzu’? If the answer is in the affirmative, maybe you don’t want to be friends!” (April 9, 2006:15). That this sentiment is revealed in print, suggests the issues confronting those (young) Swahili men who choose to wear *kanzu*. Despite this notoriety (or perhaps because of it) more young men are opting to wear *kanzu*, more often (Omari personal interview, 3 June 2006, Mombasa, Said personal interview 6 June 2006, Mombasa). This observation and commentary by the research participants is further supported by the recent availability of secondhand *kanzu* from the United Arab Emirates, and the sharp increase in value of such imports (discussed below).

In their recollections, several interviewees spoke at length about *kanzu* they had as children, often only one at a time, and their responsibility to have it washed and pressed on Thursdays, in preparation for the mosque each Friday. One interviewee originally from Malindi, who attended boarding school in Nairobi as a child, remembered even this laundry chore with fondness, commenting on how special the garment was, though modest, and how he cherished his single *kanzu*. Now his closet was full (of *kanzu* and other clothing), he no longer did his own washing (it was done by a “houseboy”), and the connection he felt with the garment was somehow diminished by this lack of engagement (Jamal, personal interview, 1 June 2006, Mombasa). When I asked the domestic worker responsible for washing these *kanzu*, who is Muslim but not Swahili, he owned the garment himself, he indicated that he had one, which he obtained as a gift from his employer (Kazungu, personal interview, 10 June 2006). The employer in turn indicated that he periodically purchases *mitumba* [secondhand] *kanzu* to give as gifts to Muslim men he knows would not otherwise be able to afford the garment.

Whereas *buibui* worn by Swahili women are not available as secondhand garments or *mitumba* (one interviewee, a man, explained this absence by noting women’s strong relationships to their clothes. “Women would never give away their *buibui*²⁷!”), a recent appearance of secondhand *kanzu* in Nairobi and Mombasa offers a stark contrast to the wholly western image of these garments. On side streets off First Avenue in Nairobi’s Eastleigh Estate and at several locations on Digo Road around MacKinnon Market in Mombasa, secondhand *kanzu* are now readily available.

Stacks of neatly folded *kanzu*, some individually wrapped in clear plastic sacks, crowd together on small tables located beside the road. Sizes vary from infant to large and tall adult,

²⁷ In fact, women do give away their *buibui*, though these exchanges were noted to be very individualized acts of charity, particularly, to neighbors, relatives, and friends (Amina, personal interview, 14 May 2006, Mombasa).

while available colors are primarily white and cream. While prices²⁸ are considerably lower in comparison to new *kanzu* available elsewhere in both cities, the quality of these *mitumba* (secondhand) *kanzu* is noteworthy, making them a very attractive purchase even to those who may not otherwise buy their clothing secondhand (Ahmed, personal interview, 3 April 2006, Nairobi). This quality, as described by several wearers, is evident in the heavier weight of the garment and in the softness and luster of the fabric. At least one interviewee described purchasing *mitumba kanzu* to give as gifts – he had done so only the day before we spoke (Saidi, personal interview, 4 April 2006, Nairobi). By contrast, the very existence of this secondhand trade in Islamic men’s fashion came as a considerable surprise to other interviewees who, while familiar with *mitumba*, knew it only as a option for purchasing Western-style clothing (Omari, personal interview, 3 June 2006, Mombasa).

The story of secondhand clothing in Kenya, elaborated in Chapter 4, is overwhelmingly one of garments cast off in Europe, Canada, and the United States, often donated by the original purchaser at local collection bins and retail thrift shops, and subsequently sorted, sold, and shipped to an increasing number of destinations in sub-Saharan Africa (see Hansen 2000 for a Zambian example and Rivoli 2005 for a discussion of Tanzanian *mitumba*). While *mitumba* was available in Kenya through the 1960s and 1970s, when it was regulated by the Kenya National Trading Corporation, two subsequent events altered the *mitumba* trade. In the late 1970s businesses turned from retailing secondhand clothes to making new clothing (McCormick 1996) and a 1984 ban on imports of second-hand clothes strengthened their position. The ban was subsequently lifted in 1991 (Ongile and McCormick 1996, McCormick 1998).

²⁸ In 2006, the price of a new *kanzu* (always negotiable) was 1500 Ksh, while good quality used *kanzu* were selling for 300 Ksh (\$21 USD and \$4 USD @ 70 Ksh = \$1 USD).

Trade data for worn or used garments (HS6309) imported to Kenya from the United Arab Emirates shows a sharp increase in recent years, from a trade value of USD \$22,398 in 2000 to the most recent available figure of USD \$1,005,470 in 2004, representing a concomitant increase in the net weight of items from 29,398 kg to 1,594,750 kg in the same time period (Table 7). While it is not certain, nor even likely, that these numbers exclusively represent the trade in secondhand Muslim clothing, these figures are nevertheless suggestive. During fieldwork in Dubai, I could not locate any secondhand clothing markets, nor were any interviewees aware of the existence of such a market. *Mitumba* wholesalers of “western” clothing in Gikomba and in Mombasa interviewed for this project were unfamiliar with the availability of secondhand clothing from Dubai. Nevertheless, the U.A.E. has risen to fifth place on a list of the top ten exporters of secondhand clothing to Kenya.

Period	Trade Value (USD)	Net Weight (Kg)
2000	\$22,944	29,398
2001	\$107,400	171,777
2002	\$377,062	551,125
2003	\$1,045,554	1,518,437
2004	\$1,005,470	1,594,750

Table 7. HS6309 (*mitumba*) U.A.E. exports to Kenya.
Source: UN Comtrade.

Kikoi, noted above as worn under *kanzu* or as a stand-alone waist wrap either in public or, more frequently, in the home or mosque have, conversely, declined in use among Swahili men based on interview narratives but have entered a new trading space as a garment widely marketed to tourists, particularly women. The contrast of a male Swahili garment associated with Islam now promoted through a sexualized and suggestive advertisement campaign to Western women, struck some interviewees as inappropriate and uncomfortable (personal interviews, various, Mombasa). One young respondent, when shown a magazine image (Fig. 27) of these new “kikoy” (the spelling of the item has likewise been changed to accommodate non-Swahili speakers), was nonplussed by the overt sexuality of the image (and the gender inconsistencies within normative Swahili practices) and instead commented on the garish colors, anathema to Swahili men’s *kikoi*, which he found particularly offensive (Yusuf personal interview, 19 May 2006, Mombasa).

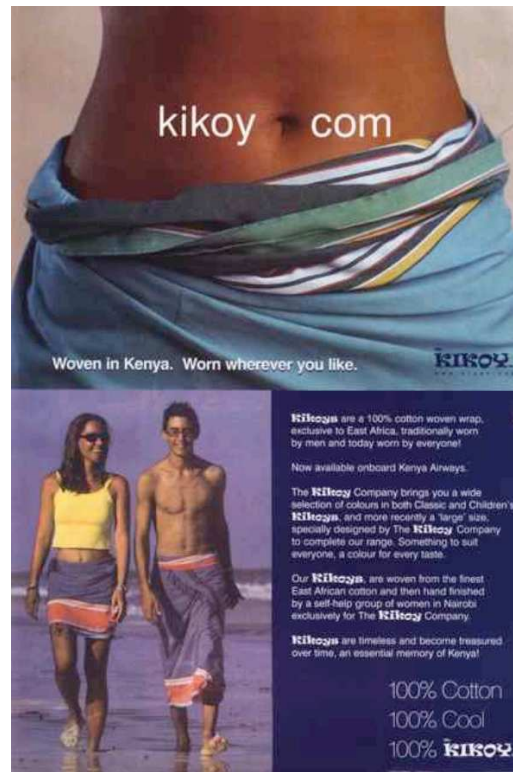


Fig. 27. Kikoy “dot” com ([Kenya] Travel News May 2006).

The choice of clothes for men extends beyond dichotomies of local/Islamic or western to include the introduction of new western-style clothing designed with an awareness of such phenomena as the Iraq war. The irony of Osama bin Laden t-shirts, emblazoned with his visage (and other iconography, including graffiti) had been openly displayed in Mombasa and Lamu in 2002 but had seemingly declined as fashionable statements given their relative absence in 2006 (only some graffiti remained). The clothing messages, however, had become increasingly subtle, including the several t-shirts I witnessed in Nairobi with one word and no additional graphics: “Faluja.”²⁹ According to one young man (28 years old and Muslim), who was wearing the shirt at work in a domestic shipping company in Nairobi: “I bought the shirt in Eastleigh [Nairobi – see chapter 6]. When I saw it, I liked the simplicity. It’s good looking, but still it shows my support.

²⁹ “Faluja” is a Sunni town (also spelled “Falluja”) in Iraq (in)famous for its fierce resistance to U.S. forces.

[For whom?] Our brothers and sisters in Iraq.” When I asked what shop sold the shirts and if they had more, he replied “they are all over Eastleigh. The Somalis are bringing them in. You can get one there.” (Saidi, personal interview, 4 April 2006). For Saidi, performing” Muslim identity and connectivity is accomplished through the object of a “western-style” shirt, made possible by Somali trade and investment systems for “Dubai-clothes” (Chapter 6), including the establishment of shopping malls in Nairobi for the sale of new, imported, apparel.

Local narratives of dress, including those projected into the past, repeatedly intersect with regional and transnational understandings of Islamic identity. Many interviewees, both women and men, were quick to point out the transnational nature of their clothing, either through (often presumed) knowledge regarding the location of its manufacture, the passages clothes traveled through trade, or the neighborhood details regarding its purchase (and the often ethnic assumptions these imply). Both women and men made frequent mention of the relationship between Dubai and their clothing, though in only one instance was the U.A.E. seen as more entrepôt than place of origin. In the words of one older woman living in the Eastleigh area of Nairobi, who self-described as Swahili and is originally from the coast:

We have many styles to choose from now – many fabrics, many types of dress. The ones [textiles] coming from Bangkok are favored by the poor. Those for indoor use cost very little, but there are other qualities which cost 5000-6000 Ksh (67-80 USD). These clothes are mainly for weddings and special occasions. They are called *hariri* [silk]. They come from London, Paris, and Bangkok but not Dubai. They do not manufacture anything in Dubai – they just import and re-export. (Fatuma, personal interview, 11 April 2006, Nairobi)

Swahili Men: Fashioning Faith, Identities, and Apparel Systems

“I don’t get dressed without considering Islam” – Jamal, 30 yrs., Nairobi

While I defined “Swahili” as “a population of Kiswahili speaking Muslims of diverse origins linked by a shared cultural repertoire,” it remains important to describe how the community has been differentially constituted and the effects of these understandings. The political implications of defining oneself as, for example, Swahili or Arab or Zanzibari or Kenyan have continually transformed the cultural and ethnic landscapes of East Africa, prompting various claims of particular identities to take precedence over others (Linnebuhr 1980, Sheriff 1987, Allen 1993, Mazrui 1995, Myers 1995, Horton and Middleton 2000, Middleton 1992, 2004, Prestholdt 1998, 2004, Fair 2001, 2004, Askew 2002). Today in Kenya, identity affiliation is a combustible issue. Political contestations over identity resulted, in the 1990s, in a series of violent demonstrations on the coast in the lead-up to national elections (Warigi 1997, Thoya 2002). Ethnic and religious based political parties formally entered national politics with beginning of multi-party elections in 1992 (a move itself stemming from neoliberal reforms). With each election season, including upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections slated for December 2007, the country braces for a potential fomentation of identity based divisions (Ng’etich and Kwalia 2007).

While large-scale community violence targeting particular ethnic or linguistic groups has been relatively rare in coastal East Africa, a notable exception occurred in Zanzibar in 1964³⁰. Following these attacks residents of Unguja and Pemba islands (known collectively as Zanzibar) who identified as or were perceived to be “Arab” sought refuge in Oman, along the Kenyan coast (particularly the towns of Mombasa and Malindi), and in the United Arab Emirates. This exodus, invoked by research participants, further strengthened regional and multinational familial ties,

³⁰ The ensuing revolution led by a Ugandan and supported by the “African” inhabitants of the island, many of whom were relatively recent arrivals from the Tanganyikan mainland, resulted in the death and destruction of property of those in the community identified as Arab.

contributed to the entrenchment of the Swahili language in places as seemingly far-flung as Muscat, and helped shaped the character of the Swahili community today.

Kenya and Tanzania (especially Zanzibar), are home to the most substantial communities of Swahili today, with smaller populations in Oman, the Comoros, and, increasingly, the U.A.E. Today, as in the past, Swahili are transnational in the obvious sense of maintaining aspects of a common cultural and linguistic identity across national boundaries. While it is not uncommon to find Kenyan Swahili who have traveled abroad - either to Tanzania (most often, Zanzibar), Oman, Yemen, or, increasingly, the U.A.E. - for most, their transnational subjectivities as expressed emerge from collective spiritual, historical, and economic linkages across and through these national spaces rather than individual journeys. The expenses and difficulties of travel and their preparations (including passport application procedures inconsistently applied, and the increased scrutiny facing Muslim Kenyans seeking to exit and reenter their home) thwart many trips before their realization. In this situation, memories of those who have traveled and lived or continue to live abroad, telephone and email communication with relatives who reside outside of Kenya, and the stories associated with both, are continually revamped to strengthen familial and social bonds through these disparate spaces. Clothing serves as an important material and imaginative connection in this setting.

Given the myriad clothing choices available to Swahili men, what is worn and purchased, by whom, when, where, and why, speaks to current socioeconomic and geopolitical possibilities, and individual subjectivities, forged in a deeply transnational milieu. Clothing references global Islamic movements³¹ and their regional expressions (particularly Wahhabism, cited by several

³¹ One reference to clothing styles spanning the *umma* or community of believers occurred in a recorded interview between my research assistant [questions in brackets] and an interviewee with a sense of humor: [Your clothes are interesting. Tell me what you're wearing.] It's a Punjabi pajama. These are for resting but I have another pair for walking around. [Why Punjabi? How did that tradition reach you?]. It's common today among the Tabligh Islamic

young wearers of *kanzu* and Tabligh Jamaat), indicating the wearers participation in networks extending beyond Kenya, yet within which Kenya and East Africa, more generally, are increasingly intertwined. Other informants spoke of their frustration with the geopolitical realities of the world, most notably the war in Iraq and the perceived injustices suffered by Muslims in the global “war on terror,” and sought, with clothing, to comment. For the wearer of the “Faluja” shirt, his attraction to the garment, which he had purchased himself in a Nairobi exhibition (see Chapter 6) was expressed as both a small act of solidarity with the people of Iraq - his “brothers and sisters” - and a visible sign of awareness of and engagement with the world beyond Kenya.

This connection with a “wider world” was also expressed in the wearing of jeans, t-shirts, caps, sneakers – seen and described more frequently as “clothing for everyone, for the world” rather than as specific stylistic nods to the United States, even when the subject matter of designs and logos reflected an aspect of life in the US, particularly athletics. Also popular and often seen on young men of all faiths were British Premier League jerseys – luminous blue Chelsea jerseys were, in 2006 Kenya, notable for being emblazoned with “Emirates” - the airline of Dubai, the club’s corporate sponsors from 2001 through 2004. True “global styles” were also evident, given the buildup to the World Cup taking place throughout the first half of 2006, with local sellers reporting a near-insatiable demand for Brazilian jerseys prior to their disappointing performance (Daily Nation 2 June 2006:8). In terms of brands, even “counterfeit” logos spawned creative interpretations, as in the example of one research participant, who accessorized his outfit with an “Adibas” bag. When I asked if he was aware of a German company named “Adidas” he said he was, and proceeded to explain his choice: “when I saw this in *markiti* [retail area in Mombasa

Movement. This movement is very strong in Asian countries so Kenyan members of the movement can be found in these clothes. There also good for insect protection from mosquitoes.” (Sheikh, personal interview, 2 May 2006, Nairobi)

around Mackinnon municipal market] I thought, this is good, it's good to have competition. Why should only "Adidas" make all the money? But I didn't realize it was 'counterfeit' [in English]."

(Jamal, personal interview, 1 June 2006, Mombasa)

What does a study of Swahili clothing consumption in Kenya contribute to understandings of Islam, gender and 'international' systems of apparel? What is the importance of situating this local study in the context of transnationalism? Clothing embodies the social, cultural, and economic networks within which we are joined. Likewise, clothing offers its wearers opportunities to create new networks and relationships based on individual and collective exploitation of the possibilities inherent in clothing. In this way, dress constitutes "competing set[s] of discourses, linked to the operation of power" (Hansen 2004:370). In the examples above, the conversation is ongoing, expressed via gendered local and regional conceptualizations of faith, piety, class, and cosmopolitanism. While attention has been given to the myriad ways in which Muslim women of East Africa (and elsewhere) visibly express their identities and the politics these vocabularies imply, attention to Muslim men's fashions has been scant.

Discussions of Muslim men's fashion is limited to few scholarly references at the same time a popular imaginary of what "the" Muslim man looks like captivates the general non-Muslim public in the U.S. and elsewhere. Among published works, reference has been made to the "droop" of a man's mustache and its relationship to Turkish politics (Olsen 1985, in Secor 2002:20) and the dialectics of moustaches and memoir in Lebanon (Saghieh 2000). While these are but two examples highlighting facial hair rather than clothing, per se, writing on Muslim men's fashion is nevertheless minimal. Why? Gender norms throughout much of the world equate an interest in and awareness of clothing with women. While decreasing, the association of

women with fashion further contributed to the marginalization of research on dress, more generally, thereby devaluing the significance of dress as both cultural and economic phenomena (Hansen 2002:372). The perception of fashion in Muslim communities is likewise often bound up in similar distinctions, popularly perceived. This despite, for instance, the central (but by no means exclusive) role played by men in the clothing trade in East Africa.

In Mombasa, women are leading a reinvigorated engagement with Islam, evidenced by the increasing seriousness of purpose in matters of faith expressed in interviews for this project and observed during this research³². The recent popularity of Quranic classes amongst older women, the turn away from the conspicuous secular consumption associated with weddings to frequent collective readings of *Maulidi* (local narratives chronicling the birth of Muhammad) by these same former wedding celebrants, the popularity of local Islamic “talk radio” in Mombasa (Radio Rahma, 91.5 FM), and the widespread adoption of *niqab* (*ninja*) amongst particularly younger women are among the shifts detailed by my interviewees and witnessed during my research as occurring since 2000. In their comparatively private worlds of home and family³³, Swahili women project both a confidence in their engagement with Islam and, through wider

³² In 2002 and continuing in 2004, the social lives of many well-to-do Swahili women in Kibokoni and elsewhere in the city revolved around weddings and the opportunities for fashion consumption these events provided. Knowing and living with these wedding participants offered me ample opportunity to attend these celebrations, initially as a curiosity (on my part and the part of whomever had invited me), but gradually as an involved participant. Given the wide breadth of identities embraced by Swahili, I was often perceived as local at these events, since I wore *hijab* and appropriately sparkly gowns, covered by a *buibui* en route. These wedding celebrations, attended only by women, include ritualized dancing (to cassette accompaniment) in a large, slow-moving circle at the front of the crowd, offering women the chance to show off their dresses to one another - the more notable of which were tailored or purchased new for the occasion. Given my focus on fashion, I hoped to include a study of weddings and their associated apparel during this dissertation research. Upon my arrival in Mombasa in 2006, I was surprised to learn that weddings were no longer being celebrated with the verve of less than two years prior. Rather, the women who had spurred such lavish displays had refocused their energies on reading *Maulidi*.

³³ While this is not to suggest that Swahili women in Mombasa and elsewhere do not engage in work outside the home (they do), it does reflect the relatively circumscribed sphere of their social worlds as I experienced during three extended periods of residence (2002, 2004, 2006) totaling 12 months. Whereas the men of the community who participated in this research were more likely to interact with people outside their own ethnic groups, the female interviewees described fewer “cross-cultural” social experiences. A person’s class is a crucially deciding factor in this observation, as well-to-do women were the most restricted in their inter-ethnic relationships.

social and familial networks that link them with individuals in Zanzibar, Nairobi, Oman, and the U.A.E., an increasingly internationalized awareness. A key component in the politicizing of Swahili women is, likewise, access to satellite television (for some viewers) in Kenya, which has brought Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, MBC, LBC, and other regional channels into people's homes. The stark coverage of daily tragedies in the Palestinian territories, Iraq, and (in the summer of 2006) Lebanon, prompted deep shock, ire, and dismay, contributing to a potent sense of solidarity. On a lighter note, the popularity of Lebanon's "Star Academy" (similar to "American Idol" in the U.S.) and other programming available via satellite extends this sense of community to shared desires for certain clothing styles, accessories, and general aesthetics.

Islamic fashions (from *jalabiya*, to *buibui/abaya*, to perfumes and incense) enable the literal and figurative embodiment of these affinities in ways that are, for women, increasingly empowering. As one interviewee, a Swahili woman in her twenties, suggested:

We wear *buibui*, but these are the same [as *abaya*] in places like Dubai. Now we can get what's most in fashion as soon as it's available in their shopping malls: *buibui*, *hijab*, *ninja*. We see what people are wearing [in Arabia/the Gulf], and hear about it from people who've just come back, and we 'Africans' can [now] get these. Now Mombasa doesn't seem so far away. And, ok, some styles are not so modest, [but] most give me a good feeling as a Muslim.

For men, however, reveling in your choice of clothing, and using it as the basis for an empowered Muslim identity, is more fraught with issues of masculinity, the appropriateness of attention to one's appearance, and the particular gendered encounters with daily life that Swahili, and all men in varying ways, experience. As members of a community marginalized with respect to a Christian majority, and possessing an officially undefined ethnicity in a nation in which one's tribal affiliation has often formed the basis of people's relationships (or lack thereof) to political and economic power, Swahili men in Kenya who choose to wear Islamic clothing in situations other than Friday prayers are making a pronounced statement of personal and

collective identity. Given the wider geopolitical climate, this renewed adoption of Islamic fashion is, similarly, increasingly bold. While the U.S. embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1999 brought worldwide attention to East African positionings within widespread terrorist networks, it was the September 11th attacks in the United States³⁴ that visited perceptible scrutiny on the Kenyan coast, particularly. In the post 9-11 global “war on terror” visibly Muslim men in areas where they are not the majority are, however tacitly, the focus of attention. Unlike women, Swahili men are free to choose from various styles that do not direct attention to religious identity – jeans, t-shirts, button-down shirts, trousers, suits, etc. The adoption of Islamic clothing, particularly among younger men, signals both shifting subjectivities and concomitant changes in the political economy of clothing in East Africa.

By implementing policies under the rubric of neoliberalism, the Government of Kenya (GoK) has contributed both to the “abandonment” of its citizens to *mitumba* (and the subjectivities associated with “secondhand” status), and, at the same time, laid the foundations for a varied, highly informal, apparel marketplace in which those with the means to participate as consumers (and entrepreneurs) may exploit various clothing options to “fashion” new and/or strengthen existing transnational relationships. This countervailing effect contributes to the creation of consumer (and entrepreneurial) subjectivities rooted in local understandings of identity, faith, and the visual performance of both via clothing, and the intersection of these local understandings with the international apparel systems in which they are a part. For Swahili, clothing consumption thus offers a means by which to assert particular Islamic subjectivities, while this consumption is itself tied to specific transformations in the regional political economy

³⁴ A subsequent incident near Mombasa in November 2002 involving a rocket propelled mortar launch at an Israeli-chartered aircraft departing Moi International Airport and a suicide car bombing of a coast hotel that killed three Israelis and ten Kenyans further heightened concern (see “Terror in Kenya” http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/africa/july-dec02/kenya_setup_11-29.html, accessed 16 July 2007).

of the Indian Ocean and the particular sartorial effects of neoliberal policies enacted in Kenya. Swahili have long utilized the flexibility of clothing to assert particular socio-cultural affiliations, framed both locally and regionally (Prestholdt 1998, Fair 2001). Today some Swahili, in particular, are (re)turning to historical ties with Arabia, newly conceived, and visibly expressed in/as fashion.

Chapter 6:

Re-fashioning Transnational Spaces

Unguja [Zanzibar] was everything for us coastal people. There was America, England...[but] Unguja fed our soul. It gave us everything. We got everything from Unguja. It was our Dubai in those days [before the 1960s]. Now Dubai is our everything.”

- Zeinab, May 8, 2006, Nairobi¹

Transnational Narratives

In Kenya, Dubai is a potent presence. Shopping centers and individual stores invoke Dubai as a place name from Nairobi’s Central Business District to outlying Eastleigh (Fig. 28). Airline posters in travel agency windows exhort Kenyans to shop in Dubai (and elsewhere in Asia)². Newspapers feature prominent color advertisements offering investment properties in the Emirate. Kenyan news coverage features frequent references to various personalities traveling to and from Dubai³. Auctions in Dubai are

¹ This quote is excerpted from an interview conducted in Nairobi in May, 2006 with Zeinab, a 60-plus year old matriarch and grandmother living with her extended family in an apartment adjacent to Ngara market, Nairobi. Zeinab is originally from Malindi, on the Kenyan coast. The “we” in her quote refers to Muslims, and particularly, Swahili.

² Kenya Airways and Ethiopian Airlines ran regular colored ads in the two leading Kenyan dailies throughout 2006 advertising new routes to Asia from Nairobi (Bangkok, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Guangzhou) and emphasizing the “shoppers paradise” offered by each destination (see Fig. 34 for a related airline poster).

³ This coverage was most notable in the case of a bizarre controversy occurring during this fieldwork in 2006. A pair of “mercenary brothers,” both named Artur and believed to be Armenian, wreaked havoc on Kenya during a brief and flamboyant stay at the rumored behest of high level politicians, including possible involvement in a globally publicized midnight raid on one of Kenya’s leading newspapers and an armed storming of Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi, before hastily fleeing – to Dubai. While Armenian representatives in Kenya denied their claims of association, and the “brothers” offered conflicting “proof” of their origins, they did maintain that they resided, in luxury, in Dubai (Okutoyi 2006).

widely advertised in Kenya. Throughout this project, interviewees spoke of their extended families and “associates” in Dubai, their own time visiting or residing in the Emirate, or their imagined plans for travel. Making claims to Dubai and the particular images (of wealth, opulence, opportunity) these claims conjured was thus a pervasive and popular activity in urban Kenya in 2006. While Dubai’s prominence in Kenya and East Africa, more broadly, has a foundation in the welcome offered to Zanzibaris fleeing the violence of the 1964 revolution⁴, and though proximity strengthens Dubai’s accessibility, the intensified exchanges of late are attributable, I argue, to the ramifications of economic globalization and the persistence and reformulation of transnational cultural connections within the region. Together these forces help generate the current persistence of a fourth international apparel system in Kenya: “Dubai clothes.”

⁴ Dubai and Oman offered refuge to “Arab” Zanzibaris whose lives and livelihoods were at risk following the violent overthrow of the newly independent government in January 1964. As many Zanzibaris initially fled to the Kenyan coast, a number of Kenyans, by claiming Zanzibari identity, were able to join the refugee wave to the Gulf for the economic opportunities relocation presented. These individuals, and their families, continue to provide a powerful link to Dubai within the Swahili community.



Fig. 28. *Dubai Exhibition, River Road and Dubai Cash & Carry, Koinange Street, Nairobi (March 2006).*

This chapter focuses on the transnational narratives of Kenyan traders and a detailing of associated spaces of apparel trade and consumption in both Kenya and Dubai. There is an expanding interest in research on transnationality (Glick Schiller et al. 1992, Appadurai 1996, Mitchell 1997a, 1997b, Portes 1997, Ong 1999, Pries 1999, Crang et al. 2003, Mitchell 2003, Pratt and Yeoh 2003, Cravey 2005), though researchers bring multiple understandings to their engagement with this term. Characterizing its breadth and scope, transnationalism has been applied to research on such disparate themes as international migration, subjectification and place making, capitalist reorganizations of the local and global, travel, refugees, and politics extending beyond the purview of the nation-state. Transnationalism, as such, “has provided a broad, flexible conceptual apparatus that has been adopted across disciplines to examine interconnections between

global economic restructuring, the politics and cultures of diasporas, ethnicity and race, class, community, gender, and the nation” (Olsen and Silvey 2006:805).

With Olsen and Silvey, I share their expansive definition of transnational to indicate “an accelerated exchange across national borders of information, labor, ‘culture,’ and capital by nonstate actors in ways that challenge, rework, and/or reinforce those borders and their relationships to states.” (2006:806). With this understanding, this chapter explores alternative practices within the “global” apparel trade whereby economic and cultural processes, together with an intervening and insinuating identity politics, contribute to newly emergent linkages between Africa and Asia performed, in this case, by small garment traders. This work joins an emerging interest in the networks of small transnational textile and apparel traders conducted by MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga (2000) on Congo-Paris connections and Yükker (2004) on Istanbul as a node in the wide-ranging Russian apparel shuttle trade (*chelnochny biznes*).

As noted previously (see Chapter 3), Kenya began processes of economic liberalization in 1990, creating a series of profound effects for Kenyans and expanding an emergent configuration of the textile and apparel industries toward an export-oriented model (Gibbon 2003, McCormick et al. 2002, Gibbon and Ponte 2005). The clothing needs of Kenyans were subsequently met by re-legalizing the importation of secondhand clothing or *mitumba* in 1991. Though *mitumba* was available prior to the reversal of this ban, its increased volumes and growing popularity throughout the 1990s ensured the demise of the domestic apparel industry, plagued by high costs, declining investments,

and perhaps the most fatal flaw for garment manufacturers: a perception by consumers of a lack of fashion sense⁵.

In tandem with the increasing availability of *mitumba*, a second apparel option emerged for the Kenyan consumer, linked to the profound social changes surrounding an influx of Somali refugees in Kenya fleeing government collapse in 1991 (Little 2003, Horst 2004, Campbell 2005). Additional shifts in Kenya's regulatory environment linked to liberalizing imperatives, including changes to monetary restrictions for travelers and the relative ease of passport availability, coupled with the recent re-emergence of transnational networks of traders, transport, and market spaces, has contributed to the availability of imported new clothes for the domestic consumer, known colloquially as "exhibition" or "Dubai" clothes⁶.

In this chapter, I turn to Dubai in order to extend previous discussions of international clothing and textile systems operating within Kenya to include the increasing cultural (and economic) presence of "Dubai clothes." I explore the particular ramifications of "Dubai" in the context of consumption and apparel economies in Kenya, and, in turn, the presence of Kenya and Kenyans in Dubai. I do this through a multi-sited approach conjoining fieldwork in Nairobi and Mombasa with a two-month study in Dubai. Beginning with a discussion of hybrid spaces of Dubai-Kenya, I present interviews and subsequent analyses with boutique and/or clothing stall proprietors in

⁵ See Chapters 2 through 4 for this discussion.

⁶ Specifics as to the volume of trade in "Dubai" clothes are difficult to capture, given the "informality" and often extra-legal nature of the trade. U.N. Comtrade data available for, most recently, 2002, 2003, and 2004 indicates a rise and subsequent decline in the value (as USD) of trade in HS61 and HS62 garments (apparel knitted and crocheted and not knitted or crocheted, respectively): \$204,725 (2002), \$1,076,915 (2003), and \$809,077 (2004). Given the rising number of exhibitions noted in Kenya and the addition of numerous shopping malls in Eastleigh, these figures are likely higher in recent years.

Nairobi and Mombasa, including the narratives of research participants in Dubai. In these discussions, the entrepreneurs describe their current businesses, the mobility upon which their trade relies, and the social and economic spaces of Islam sustaining their livelihoods.

In the process, I aim to detail how transnationalism and Islam are deployed as a competitive strategy and business imaginary by Kenyans who are able to cobble together the funds and the contacts, thus creating small businesses founded upon international trade. While “shopping” in Dubai, and transacting in their places of business in Kenya, these East African entrepreneurs invoke various historical, familial, regional, religious, and geopolitical claims to spaces of commerce and trade in Asia. In these narratives, the research participants rarely relied on the terms “local,” “global,” and “globalization”⁷. Ibn Battuta (both the 14th century “geographer” and the Dubai mall that shares his name) was, however, invoked by two interviewees as illustrative of the ways in which Muslim networks animate their own travels and, conversely, their businesses. Through this turn to Ibn Battuta and the (Islamic and commercial) transnationalism he has been recast to represent, these Kenyan proprietors of “Dubai clothes” offer personalized expressions of Africa’s increasing South-South engagements.

⁷ Local, global, and globalization, were rarely named by participants interviewed in Kiswahili (where the corresponding terms are “kikwetu,” ulimwengu,” and “utandawazi”). Interviews conducted in English, by contrast, include mention of “local” and “global” in various contexts and the occasional use of “globalization.” This contrast may suggest the class and educational divides characterizing those interviewees who spoke in Swahili as compared to those who preferred or were equally comfortable in English.

Dubai in Kenya

In Nairobi, in a River Road “exhibition⁸,” the narrow passageways are dark, punctuated by occasional fluorescent lights, and crammed with small stalls demarcated by plywood and metal walls, with individual stall doors distinguishing one business from the next⁹. The stalls, no more than three meters square, have been carved from the larger space of what was once a department store, owned by a Kenyan family of Indian descent¹⁰, near the city center. When the department store business closed in 1999, and Nairobi’s City Council assumed ownership, the large structure remained vacant for five years. In 2004, the city council offered the space for lease through a property management office based in Nairobi. Specifically, leases were to be offered to multiple small businesses, rather than a single tenant, to form a “free mark” or “exhibition” – consumption spaces that emerged in urban Kenya in the late 1990s with the claiming of public space in a city park for hawkers of new merchandise. The sellers obtained their wares, in part, by purchasing the items from Somali importers in Eastleigh, who ran their own informal businesses. While prices vary amongst exhibitions, here in “Dubai” stall-keepers paid 4000 Ksh per month (or approximately \$51 USD) in addition to an annual

⁸ The interchangeable terms “exhibition” and “freemark” signal a new consumption space in urban Kenya whereby buildings housing now defunct single establishments (like the department store of this example) are subdivided into many small spaces or stalls available for individual lease. The resulting structure, which previously housed one shop, now boasts tens or hundreds. While this adaptive reuse is not unknown in the United States for instance, where a community might transform a former Wal-Mart on the outskirts of town into a flea market, the phenomenon in Kenya is clearly demarcated as an indoor space for the sale of new merchandise (garments and electronics). At the time of this fieldwork, secondhand sellers had not moved into these spaces and remained at a variety of outdoor markets in the cities.

⁹ The following exhibition discussion is based on participant-observation and interviews with stall proprietors from March 6-8, 2006.

¹⁰ A complicated tension between Kenya’s “Asian” business community and Somali refugees perceived as usurping their trade, is, regrettably, beyond the scope of this project (see Nagar 1997, 1998, and 2000 on the Indian community in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania).

payment to the city of 3000 Ksh (\$38 USD) for a trading license. In some stalls, business was brisk.

The goods on offer are remarkably similar in each establishment and comprise one of the following three categories: mobile phones (and accessories), shoes, and clothes. The clothing is all new and often synthetic. Some stalls specialize in women's business clothing (which may include undergarments), while others sell athletic t-shirts and jerseys, or men's suits. A scan of the manufacturing labels in the garments, when present, indicates China and, to a lesser extent, Turkey, to be the primary manufacturing locations for these items of apparel. The stall owners and workers, while acknowledging that many of the clothes they sell are made in China, particularly, nevertheless describe their stock as "Dubai clothes." According to one stall owner:

they're Dubai clothes because we buy our stock in Dubai. While I, myself, have not been there [Dubai] I know many people who regularly travel to Dubai and send back these clothes. They pass through Eldoret [airport]. I buy them here in Nairobi from those who go abroad. Especially, I buy them in Eastleigh [from Somali merchants] and sell them here [River Road] to people who do not want to travel to Eastleigh. Or maybe they're afraid [of Eastleigh]. Calling them Dubai clothes means, to us, they are from Dubai – not necessarily where they are made. And calling them Dubai clothes sounds much better. People don't want to wear "China clothes" – it gives the wrong impression. (Charles, personal interview, 7 March 2006, Nairobi)

As this quote suggests, the new clothes being sold in Kenya travel a circuitous route both spatially and in terms of the various subjectivities they conjure. While identities are clearly linked with corporeal presentations reflected in clothes (see Chapter 4 for a discussion), preferences for particular geographies (Dubai as opposed to China) and the reliance on Muslim networks in sourcing the clothing (through the Somali community in Eastleigh, discussed below) point to ways in which identities are further implicated in the apparel trade in Kenya. The spaces of "Dubai" in Kenya – both the

shopping centers and their contents – serve as a source of materiality and imaginary linking East Africa with Asia (including connections to Far East). As products of a particular (and sustained) period in Kenya in which economic liberalization imperatives are fundamentally altering perspectives on exports and imports, “Dubai clothes” – new jeans, blouses, suits, and skirts - serve as an ironic counterpoint to the Export Processing Zones, whose manufacturing plants produce similar items for consumption in the United States and Europe.¹¹

As these garments travel to and from Kenya amidst global regulatory frameworks of tariffs, taxes, and tastes, a parallel and intersecting movement of East African buyers arrives in (and transits through) Dubai. Seeking new clothes for the domestic market, to be sold in the increasing number of urban exhibitions and freemarks in Nairobi and Mombasa (*Standard* 2006b:2) these small traders are building on a series of transformations that speak to the importance of cultural networks in sustaining the transnational economies of “Dubai clothes” in Kenya. While cultural embeddedness, transnationality, and economic innovation are familiar tropes in the study of diasporic Chinese, in particular (Ong and Nonini 1996, Mitchell 1997, Ong 1999, 2003) less well known are African examples, building on new diasporas most often linking Europe and North America with Africa through the movements and investments of recent immigrants (Diouf 2000). Before I turn to an introduction of Kenyan traders in Dubai, the new commercial “diasporas” of which they are a part, and the ways in which identities intersect with the commerce of clothing, I return to the availability of “Dubai clothes” in

¹¹ “Dubai clothes” likewise serve as a painful barrier to small-scale garment producers in Kenya forced to compete with the loosely regulated importation of new clothes at very cheap prices (McCormick et al. 2002)

Kenya, the new consumption spaces with which they are associated, and particularly, the role of Somali refugees and the Muslim networks within which they operate in creating this phenomenon.

The recent history of garments in Kenya owes much to the innovations and capital investments¹² of the local Somali community, many of who arrived in Kenya as exiles in the 1990s¹³. In this geography, “ground zero” of the trade in new apparel that gave rise to the term “Dubai clothes” is located at Garissa Lodge, in Eastleigh, Nairobi¹⁴. In 1991, with three beds to a room, accommodation at Garissa Lodge was 15 Ksh per night. By day, lodgers spread their wares on the hotel beds, and a thriving business, sustained by a few Somali traveling to India to purchase garments for resale in Kenya, was founded. The hostel has since vacated the premises, and a fire destroyed the original building in 2000 (BBC coverage of the incident described Garissa as “mini-Dubai”),¹⁵ but “Garissa

¹² Several of my (non-Somali) interviewees added “unscrupulousness” and its equivalents to these traits, while at the same time and apparently, unbothered by possible contradictions, noting that Somalis rely on unwavering trust and dependability as the bedrock of their financial success.

¹³ While areas bordering Somalia, particularly North Eastern Province in Kenya (the capital of which is the town of Garissa), have a majority Somali population, urban Somali communities have factored most critically in the recent consumption changes in Kenya. Of the influx of refugees entering Kenya in the 1990s, those with the financial ability and/or social connections to avoid the displaced persons camps in Northeast and Coast Provinces joined an established urban Somali community extant in Eastleigh, Nairobi since the 1960s (for discussions of Somalis and commerce in Kenya see Little 2003, Horst 2004, and Campbell 2005; see also Hyndman 1997 on aid flows and Somali refugees in Kenya) Though a detailed discussion of the Somali influence in Kenya is beyond the scope of this project, its indelible imprint on commerce, particularly the contemporary garment trade, its effects on the urban built environment and the ethnic tensions associated with its increasing economic clout are critical components of broader East African socio-economic narratives.

¹⁴ The following discussion is drawn from interviews with the manager of African Salihya Mombasa (15 June 2006), two garment traders in Eastleigh (Garissa Lodge and Amal Shopping Centre – 14 March and 22 March 2006, respectively), and a boutique owner in Mombasa (17 June 2006).

¹⁵ Arsonists are believed to have burned down Garissa Lodge in a December 2000 attack, although the perpetrators have not been found (news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1071895.stm, last accessed July 12, 2007). The account quotes a woman trader, understandably “devastated” by the fire, who had recently stocked her store of imported Italian shoes in preparation for the upcoming Id al-Fitr celebrations. One of the

Lodge” – the shopping center – remains. Like a Macy’s anchoring the corridor of a US mall, the once wild Garissa Lodge (whose name continues to conjure images of freewheeling dealers of AK-47s and anything else one might desire and is likewise synonymous with all of Eastleigh’s apparel establishments) is now the relatively staid center of a rapidly expanding commercial community¹⁶ founded on the premise of new apparel for domestic consumption at a time when Kenya clothing offerings were, by and large, commensurate with *mitumba*.

With Garissa’s success¹⁷, and the continual influx of people and capital¹⁸ circulating in Eastleigh throughout the 1990s, a multitude of shopping centers and complementary businesses emerged in both Nairobi and, later, in Mombasa. Among the Somali-established businesses founded in Kenya in the 1990s, African Salihya Shipping Company, now based in Dubai, was created in 1997 in tandem with the emergence of the small garment traders who now supply the bulk of its clients (personal interview, 15 June

interviewees for this project, presently of Amal Shopping Centre in Eastleigh, lost his wares in the same blaze (Farouq, personal interview, 22 March 2006, Eastleigh).

¹⁶ In an feature titled “The estate that never sleeps,” Kamau Mutunga describes Garissa Lodge in “Little Mogadishu” (Eastleigh) “initially [as] a lodging for refugees, [though] the complex has spawned 30 others, making Eastleigh a bustling commercial centre, with more malls than anywhere else in Kenya. This has helped shed off its reputation for gun running, a little.” (*Daily Nation* 2006: 8).

¹⁷ Not all Kenyans, of course, share this positive view of Garissa and of the “Somali influence,” more generally. My research assistant, who was not Somali, was several times mistook as such during various field visits, including one in Ngara market where a *jua kali* (informal) seamstress shouted “you’ve ruined everything in Kenya!” I initially assumed the comment was meant for me, but she clarified “no him, and his Somali brothers!”

¹⁸ The Somali community dominates the foreign exchange black market in Kenya, operating openly in many areas including Makadara Street in Mombasa. According to Horst, Somali migrants in the 1970s and 80s were located primarily in the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia and used their remittances to purchase commodities from Arabia for sale in Somalia. After the war, the balance of Somali migrants outside Africa shifted to Western Europe, the USA, Canada, and Australia. An informal transnational system of money transfer or *xawilaad* was subsequently established to handle the growing volume of international remittances (Horst 2004). As Horst notes in the context of *xawilaad* and as evidenced in trade in ‘Dubai clothes’ “often the most successful migrant businesses arise in the very interstices created by transnationalism, for example in shipping and cargo companies, import and export firms,...and money transfer houses” (ibid: 7).

2006, Mombasa). For 200 Ksh per kilo (\$2.56 USD), Kenyan garment entrepreneurs transport their goods by air from Sharjah on Russian-made cargo planes chartered on Daallo Airlines through Eldoret Airport in western Kenya. Door-to-door service, from Deira to Mombasa, takes seven days.

African Salihya capitalized on several tandem developments in creating a service attractive to small entrepreneurs. Eldoret airport, established in 1994, offered both lower prices to lure business to its relatively remote site in western Kenya and a steady stream of flights to transport flowers to the United Arab Emirates from nearby farms. The flights, destined for Sharjah, offloaded flowers and, initially, returned to Kenya without substantial cargo. Daallo Airlines, founded by a Somali in Djibouti in 1991, following the collapse of the Somali government, established itself in Kenya in 1999 and, in 2000, commenced cargo flights to and from Eldoret.¹⁹ Daallo is now the primary cargo charter utilized by African Salihya. The shipping firm has since expanded from Kenya, to its current headquarters in Dubai, with offices in Bangkok, Hong Kong, Guangzhou, Istanbul, and London.²⁰ Not surprisingly, with the exception of London, these locations map neatly onto the emerging transnational networks of new apparel imported into Kenya by small traders. The expansion of passenger air service, low cost shipping options, informal money transfer systems (*xawilaad*), and abundant stock in Asia all inextricably contribute to a reworking of geographies of international trade that, while comparatively small scale, are nevertheless part and parcel of recent shifts in African engagement with Asia. As the critical role played by the Somali community in Kenya suggests, a crucial link in the emergence of this apparel system is Islam.

¹⁹ www.daallo.com

²⁰ www.africansalihya.com

As the interviewees for this project noted, and as fieldwork in Dubai confirmed, not all Kenyans (nor Tanzanians) traveling to Dubai to source garments for sale in East Africa are Muslim. Indeed, in her narrative below, Khadija drew particular attention to the increasing number of (presumed Christian) Kikuyu now traveling to Dubai on the ‘Dubai clothes’ circuit. Likewise, the (Muslim) manager of the Mombasa office of the Somali-owned African Salihya shipping company thought it pertinent to note that “while this business began with Muslims [referring to both the shipping company itself and the trade in Dubai clothes that helps sustain it] many are now from upcountry [a shorthand indicating areas inland from the coast and, therefore, Christian]. Everyday more customers are Kikuyus. With these clothes, they’re really doing good business.” He continued, invoking the connections he perceived between Islam and apparel, “Clothes are a part of our history. Even our prophet was buying and selling clothes. We [Muslims] believe the clothes business is blessed by God – *biashara nguo* [clothes business] – ‘*bia*’ na ‘*shara*’ [Arabic] - *kununua na kuuza* [Swahili for ‘buy and sell’].” “Still,” he noted inclusively with respect to both Muslim and Christian traders, “we’re coming from the same basket. We travel the same roads.” (Ali Kassim, personal interview, 15 June 2006).

(Business) Travel and Transnationalism

Travel, mobility, migration, and flows have garnered considerable scholarly attention since the early 1990s, displacing earlier preoccupations with cultural practices bounded by specific local and, particularly, national rules of engagement. This latter “cultural mosaic” approach, reflecting “an immutable link between cultures, peoples, or identities and specific places” (Lavie and Swedenburg 1996:1) has been undermined by

an increasingly accepted recognition that cultural processes “regularly exceed the boundaries of individual nation states, sketching ‘transnational’ cartographies of cultural circulation, identification and action” (Crang, Dwyer and Jackson 2003:439; Hannerz 1989, 1992, 1996; Clifford 1992; Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Bhabha 1994; Appadurai 1998).

While an appreciation of culture and place as constellations of connections within wider cultural circuits (Massey 1992) is increasingly invoked, the specifics of transnationalism: from an agreed-upon meaning, to what constitutes research within its purview, are a source of contention within the social sciences. Transnational corporations provided the first widespread exemplar of the term’s usage (Taylor and Thrift 1982, 1986), while more recently transnationalism has come to be viewed by some as connoting, exclusively, migrant populations (Mitchell 2000), in response to concerns that the term is too casually, and too speculatively, deployed. Despite these and other divergent meanings, the use of transnationalism suggests a “broad refiguration of human geographies away from a national (and indeed international) imaginary” (Crang, Dwyer and Jackson 2003:439), though with a pervasive sense of the novelty of such social organization.

Together with, and indeed exceeding, transnationalism in popular and academic imaginaries, globalization has emerged as a key term in the new millennium. From its purported beginnings as a concept linked with the iconic view of whole Earth afforded by moon travel, to its rise in the 1970s and 80s as a buzzword of business, media, scholarship, and governance, to its ubiquity in millennial discourse, “the concept has seemingly acquired a life of its own” (Taylor, Watts and Johnston 2002:1). Marked also

by a focus on movement and flows, but indicating a “specific scale of social activity [that] is worldwide or planetary in scope,” globalization distinguishes itself from ‘transnationalism’ by its transcendence of relations between states, operating “as if borders were not there” (ibid.). Regardless of one’s varying approaches to and perceptions of globalization, its enormous discursive presence indicates that it cannot be ignored. Rather, the concept begs thoughtful engagement to evaluate its ability to describe our present world.

Geography is a seemingly well-placed participant in debates on globalization, though the discipline has been sharply disparaged for its lack of trenchant involvement (Dicken 2004). In an earlier work, Taylor, Watts, and Johnston focus particular attention on the ways in which geography and globalization intersect, amid calls for situating geographical knowledge at the center of twenty-first century debates (2002). Of the four relationships they posit between geography and globalization, the first considers geohistorical approaches as a counter to “presentism,” or the assumption that contemporary globalization is necessarily and in all respects distinctive from historical antecedents. Secondly, spaces of globalization are identified as “spaces of places” and “spaces of flows” suggesting an active and relational understanding of space to challenge the notion of the globe as an inert stage upon which “events inevitably unfold” (2002:2). Third, the authors suggest the importance of geographical difference in combating the sense of globalization as an “all-encompassing narrative, a seamless field of connections which over-determines social change” (ibid.). Finally, reactions to globalization are considered as, alternatively, “place-based resistances to trans-state processes and cosmopolitan embraces of globalization.”

This research responds to concerns raised by both transnational scholars (and their detractors) and the imperatives suggested by a call for geographical engagement with globalization debates, as summarized above. In particular, the emergence of a small-scale but nevertheless transnational trade in new apparel imports from Asia to Africa points to several developments that intersect with the calls, above, for a geographical intervention in globalization debates. A focus on East Africa with respect to communities in Arabia and elsewhere in Asia, draws upon the *longue durée* of such engagement, thereby assessing what is, in fact, novel with respect to their contemporary manifestations. By acknowledging “spaces of places” and “spaces of flows” this study ‘grounds’ activities of mobility and exchange while at the same time rejecting a facile use of “flow” imagery, easily eliding difficulties of movement facing different people, at different times, in different places. Attention to geographical difference is thus critical to the framing of this project. Underlying this research is an awareness and respect for the ways in which communities in East Africa varyingly embrace and reject global appeals and their position within this framework. For apparel traders traveling east from Kenya in an effort to embrace some of what globalization purports to offer (and particularly for those who have not and cannot), global spaces are neither flat nor smooth but variegated. “Flows” are impeded (and conversely, eased) by fiscal and social factors. Access to capital is an obvious facilitator. Regional social networks and trader affiliations are likewise components, as the narratives below indicate.

In her work on Indonesian women migrants to Saudi Arabia, Silvey notes the relative lack of attention to religion, generally, and Islam, particularly, in research on transnational mobility and migration (2005). Quoting Kong, she supports her call that

“Religion deserves to be acknowledged fully and in like manner alongside race, class, and gender in geographic analysis (2001, in Silvey 2005:128). The creation and sustenance of the networks of new clothing imports to Kenya rely, in part, on their embeddedness in Muslim social spaces and the commercial trade routes and capital services created in tandem. While participation is not limited to Muslims, identification with Islam has “smoothed” the spaces of mobility between Kenya and Arabia for traders. Those who began the business and its earliest adopters, derived from this community. As the number of exhibition establishments in Nairobi and Mombasa expand²¹, the number of non-Muslims engaging in the trade grows. Nonetheless, for those whose apparel business has led them abroad and for those who hope to one day follow, the common destination, at least initially, remains Dubai²².

Kenyans in Dubai

Recent popular narratives of Dubai follow one of two general trajectories: awe-inspired accounts of its rapid rise as a global shopping and tourism destination and troubling depictions of the vast labor force on which this precarious creation depends. The Kenyan research participants in this project, and the conceptual and materials spaces they occupy in Dubai, remain outside both normative representations. While in 2006,

²¹ The respective City Councils indicated they do not keep specific statistics as to total numbers of exhibition establishments, nor would they provide a count of the number of trading licenses obtained.

²² Dubai, one of the seven emirates comprising the United Arab Emirates, is increasingly establishing its global (and regional) reputation through the pursuit of adventurous architectural feats, many of which pertain to audacious luxury accommodations (including the world’s tallest and first “seven-star” hotel – Burj al Arab and a series of island housing developments along the coast) and shopping (the construction of a massive indoor ski slope at the Mall of the Emirates, and the current construction of what will be the world’s largest shopping mall, Dubai Mall, for example). For a discussion of the mutability of Dubai’s landscape, see Smith 2007 (forthcoming).

1,473 (570 women, 903 men) Kenyans arrived in Dubai as “expatriate” laborers (Bin Dhakan 2007), Kenyans comprise only 0.12% of the foreign labor force (which is itself 97.13% of all workers in the Emirate) (Dubai DED 2005:27). Though Africans traveling abroad for voluntary or involuntary work is, tragically, nothing new, Kenyans are comparatively few in the vast workforce of immigrant labor enabling Dubai’s recent and dramatic transformations (Smith 2007 forthcoming). Rather than focusing on Kenyan laborers in Dubai, for the purposes of this paper, I am instead interested in the tens of thousands of Kenyans who arrive in the Gulf each year to shop.

While the total number of Kenyans in Dubai is unknown²³, 31,892 Kenyans were registered as hotel and hotel-apartment occupants in Dubai in 2006 (an increase from 9,000 in 1999). Given their hotel stays, these Kenyans have been designated as “tourists” by the Emirate (2006 Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing Dubai). As these are official figures of registered hotel guests, they represent only a fraction of the Kenyans arriving in the U.A.E. for activities other than local employment²⁴. Their numbers are nevertheless indicative of both a steady increase in, and transformation of, Kenya-Dubai connections.

Of these Kenyan “tourists,” a few are very well off financially, as would be expected of visitors to Dubai, which has thoroughly rejected marketing itself to budget-

²³ I attempted, unsuccessfully, to obtain this information from five sources: Government of Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing, Dubai Immigration, Dubai Municipality Statistics Center, the Dubai Chamber of Commerce, and the Embassy of the Republic of Kenya in Dubai. I thank Benjamin Smith for his assistance in attempting to obtain the Chamber of Commerce data, at my request.

²⁴ Of the Kenyans interviewed in the U.A.E. as a part of this study, the majority was staying in private residences with extended family and/or acquaintances, or in hotel rooms as unregistered guests (given that the number of occupants at times exceeded the allowed amount). They are thus not represented in these state statistics.

minded travelers²⁵. The average length of stay by Kenyans (at nearly four days) exceeds that of all other nationalities²⁶. Given the high cost of visiting Dubai, the number of Kenyans who are nevertheless arriving in and staying in the Emirate, primarily in the comparatively few one and two star facilities concentrated in Deira, is notable. Despite their one-star hotel predilections, these Kenyans, like their affluent compatriots and the increasing hoards of visitors from all over the world, come to Dubai to do one thing: shop. In contrast to the global marketing image of Dubai, however, as a destination for Prada, Gucci, Chanel, and other *haute couture* housed in spectacular air-conditioned malls²⁷, Kenyan “shopper-tourists” comprise a less-celebrated narrative of small traders sourcing inexpensive “Dubai clothes” from stalls and shops in Deira, for sale in their own stalls and shops back home (Fig. 28, above). For these Kenyans²⁸, Dubai is seen as a source of “cheap clothes,” starkly at odds with Dubai’s carefully cultivated image. It is also Muslim.

²⁵ This can be determined by a breakdown of the various classes of hotels on offer in Dubai – in 2006, Kenyans were registered in the following establishments: 5 star (9,359), 4 star (3,724), 3 star (3,725), 2 star (2,703), 1 star (7,015), and listed (2,808) for a total of 29,334 (2006 Dubai Hotel Statistics <http://dubaitourism.co.ae/Statistics/Files/HotelStatistics/A002%202006%20Hotel%20Statistics%20Summary.pdf>). The number of Kenyans registered as hotel apartment guests in 2006 totaled 2,558 (<http://dubaitourism.co.ae/Statistics/Files/HotelStatistics/A004%202006%20Hotel%20Apartment%20Statistics%20Summary.pdf>). In both categories, Kenyans represent the largest sub-Saharan African contingent of hotel occupants after South Africans.

²⁶ www.dubaitourism.ae/statistics/default.asp?stat=hotels

²⁷ An image that resonates with actual practice.

²⁸ I conducted twelve semi-structured interviews in Dubai from July – August 2006, including one with a Mombasan (Khadija, below) that began in Kenya. These research participants included one shipping company representative, two stall owners and a worker in Naif Souq, two Kenyan traders who I had met in Mombasa, additional shop keepers in Karama and Meena Bazaar, and four traders who I contacted on the streets in Deira, by identifying them as Kenyan, as they purchased items for their businesses. In addition, I had numerous brief conversations in the process of participant-observation, which I recorded and rely on in this presentation.

As both Christian and Muslim research subjects expressed, this detail is important with respect to both the relative safety women traders sense when engaged in this transnational travel alone and in the trustworthiness they perceive in the networked businesses of international orders, transcontinental shipping services, and money transfers. For Catherine, a Kikuyu with a stall in Eastleigh, “I wouldn’t feel good without these [Somali] services – especially for money. This way, I travel and stay here [in a one-star hotel, perceived as somewhat unsafe] and I’m not worried that I need to carry shillings or dollars in my pockets. When I need the money²⁹, I call Nairobi, and the shop gets it immediately. I am grateful for this [*xawilaad*].” She nevertheless expresses other fears for her safety due to the prevalence of prostitution, particularly, at the hotel in Deira where she stayed.

For Catherine, being a non-Muslim has not impeded her participation in the traveling circuit of the Dubai clothes trade, though she is relative newcomer (having started in 2005 following declining work as a seamstress – this was her first visit to Dubai). Back “home” in Eastleigh (where she has her shop, although she lives in nearby South B), there is some tension in the majority Muslim community for the many Christian traders, like herself, who rely on rental spaces³⁰ from Somali landlords. For

²⁹ As to where the money comes from, Catherine is organized, like Farouq (below), in a small informal association of traders. Through the friendships they have established and their similar business needs, they pool their resources to support international travel for one member of their group. Each contributor then places his or her request for particular styles (Farouq, personal interview, 22 March 2006, Nairobi and Catherine, personal interview, 16 July 2006, Dubai).

³⁰ See Campbell 2005 for a discussion of the development of Eastleigh as a Somali community. With respect to rent, in addition to a monthly payment for space in one of the many new shopping malls built by Somali investors in Kenya’s capital, an initial payment, or “goodwill,” is required to secure a spot. This goodwill payment, which is not a deposit, can be exorbitant and was reported by those interviewed to cost as much as \$5000 USD (Farouq personal interview 22 March 2006, Fatuma personal interview 11 April 2006, Eastleigh).

Khadija by contrast, a Muslim and Mombasa native, her family ties to the Gulf, access to family capital, and her business and residential location in Kibokoni, or Mombasa's Old Town, have helped provide for a successful and well-established venture (the proceeds of which she has used, in part, to fund a *hajj* pilgrimage). She described her experiences below.



Fig. 29. *Leso*-wearing Kenyan shopper³¹, Deira, Dubai.

Incense (*udi*) wafted down a narrow street in the heart of Kibokoni, or Mombasa's Old Town. The source, a meter high *oud*³² burner in the Gulf-style, sparkling with silver and green aluminum fastened to a large block of crenellated wood, was slightly obscured by quickly dissipating smoke. The *udi* burner, set at the front entrance of a small, rectangular shop, was flanked by walls displaying the latest in *buibui* or *abaya*, the black

³¹ Interestingly, this woman, who identified herself as a Gikuyu (and Christian) from Nairobi, opted to wear *leso* (including a matching piece as a head covering), which she purchased from a shop on Nairobi's River Road as a sign of respect during her stay in "Muslim" Dubai. Though *leso* remain associated with Muslim women in East Africa, her use of the garment as street wear indicated that she, herself, was likely not Muslim. She acknowledged this but expressed herself more comfortable with maintaining local mores, including head covering – this despite the thorough lack of expectations in Dubai that non-Muslims would veil. This was her first shopping visit to the U.A.E.

³² Incense in Arabic.

cloak worn by Swahili and Gulf women and the shop's specialty. Sequined tops and colorful heels are displayed beside the *buibui*. A dressing room, partitioned from the larger shop space by a heavy curtain, is located in the back corner, adjacent to a rack of discounted *buibui* and a back showroom of low-cut "hipster" jeans. Behind a glass case brimming with perfumes, lotions, *udi*, and instant charcoal, stood a man who I assume to be the proprietor: forty-something and wearing a coastal *kofia*, or Muslim cap, a button down shirt and grey trousers. Following an introduction and explanation of my interest in this Gulf *abaya* shop (as the name itself suggests) in the midst of Mombasa, he suggested I speak with the owner, his younger sister – who was preparing for an upcoming trip to Dubai.

Khadija is in her late 30s, married, and with three children. When we first meet, at her shop, she is wearing a minimalist *buibui* and *hijab*, lacking the ornamentation of many of those garments sold in the store. While born in Mombasa, her family is originally from Lamu on the northern Kenya coast. Other than extended visits elsewhere in Kenya, she has always resided in Mombasa, though she has family members in Malindi, Lamu, Nairobi, and, importantly, in the United Arab Emirates. "Always interested" in fashion, she had once trained to be a seamstress and imagined, one day, designing her own clothes for women like herself: young, urban, and thoroughly Muslim.

A visit to Dubai in 2001, however, altered this trajectory:

I had always known Dubai of course, but I had no plans to go there. My brother and an uncle had been living there in Sharjah – my uncle and his family have been there a long time – since maybe thirty or forty years - with the Zanzibaris. My father had himself the chance to go to Dubai then but he chose to stay in Kenya. A few years ago [2001] I had the opportunity to go and see Dubai myself. My brother was traveling abroad [from Sharjah] and he thought maybe I would come and stay with his wife so she wouldn't be so lonely. We have known each other since childhood here in Mombasa. So I agreed. It was then I began to prepare this business. (Khadija, personal interview, 17 June 2006)

For Khadija, Dubai had been an extended presence and part of a familiar geography, although one transmitted through the stories of family and friends. Its associations with opportunity, suggested by her mention of the Zanzibar refugee community and the wider Swahili diaspora in residence in the U.A.E., including her own family members, came to fruition in her own personal narrative following her first visit in 2001.

At the time, Khadija was married and had two children. While, given these responsibilities, she seemed an unlikely companion for her sister-in-law in Sharjah during a two-week absence by her brother, it was clear through later discussions that this invitation was purposeful. Her brother, sensing a good match between Khadija's interest in fashion and the plethora of items available in Dubai, offered to provide an initial investment from his transport company salary. With his knowledge of shipping, he similarly contributed logistical advice. After this initial visit she returned to the U.A.E. later the same year, with his assistance, to buy her first stock. Now, with the "success" of her shop, based on her own description and confirmation by other interviewees, she is able to travel to Dubai as often as three times per year. While she has yet to do so, Khadija expressed an interest in traveling further to Hong Kong or China "for the best prices," although for her immediate purposes of obtaining fashionable *buibui*, Dubai was sufficient.

In Dubai, I can find the styles [of *buibui*] we want here in Mombasa – *halwa* [soft and transparent], "georgette," *adi* [very transparent] and *shifoni* [chiffon – an older, heavier style]. Some of the *adi* I sell for 8800 Ksh [approx. \$112 USD], with beading done by hand...these I find in the shopping malls but I buy only one or two, and never the same design. At that price, no one wants to see another with the same *buibui*! But even those that cost much less – everyone wants their own design. But in Dubai there is everything and I can always find good styles...Do you see that woman [walking past the Mombasa

shop]? She is coming from Dubai – I can tell by her *hijab*. (Khadija, personal interview, 17 June 2006, Mombasa)

While Khadija has her pulse on the fashions of the moment in Dubai (and therefore Mombasa) she admitted that there is increasing competition, particularly from non-Muslim Kenyans who are setting up shops in Nairobi:

I started going to Dubai because I have family – we [on the East African coast] have always been close to Dubai and for Swahili, after [the 1964 revolution in] Zanzibar, we have looked to Dubai and are grateful that they accepted our families [fleeing the violence]. When I was first there, I saw few Kenyans, even Africans. Now Murshid [Bazaar – in Deira] looks like Moi Avenue [Nairobi and Mombasa]! And many of these are not Muslim. You hear Kikuyu when you walk by. Of course, sometimes I see friends and others from Mombasa, then it's good to have so many Kenyans. Still, I know they are not buying *buibui*, not much anyway – maybe if they have a stall in Eastleigh. They're buying jeans, tops, skirts – and all the same styles! (Khadija, personal interview, 17 June 2006, Mombasa)

In response to my questions about her travels between Kenya and Dubai, Khadija sensed her identity, as a woman and a Muslim, made the passage easier:

Since I first traveled to Dubai, in 2001, it's become more difficult here in Kenya. I have the passport - that is not a problem. For men in my family it has become more difficult. They don't wear *kanzu* or *kofia* but even then it's not comfortable. There is suspicion now. For me, I have not had any problem. I think in this way [for traveling] it's now easier to be a woman. Anyway, it's best that I travel since I know what to buy. If I ask my brother, ok, I can describe something particular and maybe he can find it. Even his wife. That's fine with a single piece. But for a shop I need more. And now women here they really know what they want. Even with *mitumba* – they may wear *ninja* [face veil - to hide their identity in the secondhand market out of shame] but they go to Kongowea [*mitumba* market outside Mombasa] and find just the right look. We [Kenyans] have become much more fashionable [since *mitumba*]. (Khadija, personal interview, 17 June 2006, Mombasa)

Even for Khadija, whose career is predicated on selling a sophisticated (and Muslim) Gulf look, including “designer” jeans and overtly sexy garments worn under *buibui* or at home with friends, *mitumba* is a welcome fact of life in Kenya. Given her own business focus of *buibui* - the one garment not available as *mitumba* - Khadija was

the rare clothing entrepreneur with little to fear from *mitumba*, yet its presence permeated even our discussion.

I met Khadija again in Dubai in July 2006, three weeks after our initial interview. She traveled the short distance by bus from her family in Sharjah, which she did most days when visiting the U.A.E., dressed in a modest *buibui* and *hijab*, sans ornamentation. We established a meeting point at the food court of Al Manal Centre, a shopping mall facing Naif Souq in Deira, as she tended to frequent more shopping establishments in this area. In Dubai, Khadija had established trade relationships with a number of low-cost *buibui* sellers in Naif souq, offering locally made *abaya* in a rapid turnover of new styles, and with *jalabiya* [dress] shops in nearby Murshid Bazaar. For more expensive items, the boutiques in Al Manal provided a wholesale price. Though she often bought only a few garments at a time, she had successfully proven herself as a recurring customer and therefore garnered wholesale discounts.

In open-air *souq al Naif*, the July heat and humidity is intense. Not unlike Kenya's exhibitions, and in stark contrast with even the relatively modest Al Manal shopping mall adjacent, the market is a warren of small stalls staffed, primarily, by Afghani men. The East African milieu extended even to language, where stall keepers were quick to offer Swahili greetings when Kenya was mentioned [in conjunction with my questions regarding the origins of their shoppers]. Khadija spoke, in Arabic and occasionally English, with several stall staff as to the timeline for new designs. On this day, however, she had not come to the souq to shop, having completed most of her orders. She had already prepared a shipment with a Dubai-based, Somali-owned firm that began its

business in Kenya in 1997. If anything “unusual” appeared, she planned to buy one or two items and pack them with her own possessions.

Khadija was quick to point out Kenyans, Tanzanians, and others who pass by en route to more shopping, as we sit in the slight shade of a café umbrella.

I am Kenyan, of course, but I feel almost at home in Dubai. As a Muslim, I can be here and feel at home and as a woman, even alone...it’s not like Nairobi, or even Mombasa...This business has given me opportunities. I thought I would design clothes, maybe one day still, but for now, at least, I am working with fashion. With exhibitions and *mitumba* there is more [in Kenya] to choose from – they’re buying for the exhibitions now [she points to some probable Kenyans, passing by] – but we [Muslims] are all wearing *buibui*. Through *abaya* I’m able to come here – to Dubai, to Sharjah...I’m able to see more [of the world], I have a good business *alhamdoulilahi*, and its possible through Islam. (Khadija, personal interview, 5 July 2006, Dubai)

Khadija presented her personal experiences as removed from the specifics of global trade organization – her conversation shifted to such topics only when coaxed³³, yet she was able through a particular historical, contemporary, and cultural moment, and the multiple identities she embraced, to appropriate the spaces and products of Dubai in fashioning a comfortable transnational trade for herself and, by extension, her family³⁴.

While discussing her own travel to and from the Gulf, the relationships she relies on to

³³ Given the well-organized networks established by Somali entrepreneurs, Khadija need only contact her “friends” at African Salihiya when an order is ready to be shipped. She pays the 200 Ksh per kilo (which she does not contract in cash as she transfers this money from Mombasa through *xawilaad*) and the order is collected, transported, cleared, and forwarded to her business in Kibokoni. In addition to shipping fees, Khadija and other importers are bound by current customs regulations on new clothing imports to Kenya requiring the payment of a 35% tariff for most garments and providing for anti-dumping laws prohibit importing goods valued below cost. While Khadija claims she pays these fees (through additional payments to Salihiya) she likewise acknowledges the undervaluing of garments as a prevalent practice and the ability, on a small scale, to avoid customs altogether. Somali businesses often face these allegations in Kenya (David Rono, personal interview 27 March 2006). McCormick et al. note the lack of enforcement of customs regulations on clothing imports (both new and used) as among the primary institutional disadvantages for small-scale garment producers in Nairobi (2002:20).

³⁴ Based on this research, women’s participation is a common characteristic of the transnational trade networks for new clothes importation in Kenya and, in this respect, shares both this feature and the links to Islam reflected in Senegalese women’s global fashion networks (see Rabine 2003, also Sylvanus 2007 on Togo).

sustain her business, and her own identity as a Muslim she paused to ask me “Have you been to Ibn Battuta³⁵ [Mall]?”

Ibn Battuta Mall and South-South materialities

Sprawling between interchanges 5 and 6 off Sheikh Zayed Road, its faux stonewalls hazy in the withering summer heat, Ibn Battuta Mall³⁶ stands among the latest Dubai meccas to creatively packaged consumption (Fig. 30). Opened in 2005, and billing itself as “the largest themed mall in the Middle East centered on the travels of renowned 14 century explorer Ibn Battuta,” the 1.5 million square foot mall (the Mall of America in Minnesota boasts, by contrast, 2.5 million square feet gross leasable space³⁷ offers “6 destinations in 1,” over 275 retail outlets, and a selective re-mapping of the twenty-nine year travels of Ibn Battuta³⁸. Following an earlier plan to open a less-than-unique outlet mall - The Gardens Shopping Mall - the space was quickly redesigned (by a construction firm in Seattle, under contract to the UAE-based developers, al Nakheel) “in response to a rapidly changing marketplace” as a lavish, upscale shopping experience and

³⁵ Ibn Battuta, discussed below, is a 14th century traveler from Tangiers, whose twenty-nine year journey spanned the west coast of Africa to the far east of China. He is sometimes celebrated as an early “Muslim geographer.” In Dubai, he has his own shopping mall dedicated to the trope of his adventurous travels, Islam, and a global spatiality privileging South-South connections.

³⁶ Ibn Battuta Mall is segmented into six distinct geographical zones, spread across an area of 5.4 million square feet, including a parking lot that can accommodate more than 5000 cars. The retail area of the mall covers 67,500 square meters with 275 retail outlets, while the Food Court (in “China”) spans 3,800 square meters (<http://www.ameinfo.com/57760.html>).

³⁷ http://www.mallofamerica.com/about_moa_facts.aspx

³⁸ <http://www.ibnbattutamall.com>

“edutainment”³⁹ site glorifying the contributions of not only Ibn Battuta but other, lesser-known scholars, statesmen, and scientists of the Muslim world⁴⁰. Tours in English and Arabic, lasting approximately 45 minutes, are offered Sunday through Thursday from locations throughout the mall.



Fig. 30. Dubai - Ibn Battuta Mall, with nearby Palm island developments clearly visible, and Naif Souq in Deira (Google Earth - frame captured 6 July 2007).

The desert surrounding Ibn Battuta would be stark and immense, as it was less than ten years ago, were it not for the rapidly rising developments crowding the vicinity. Dubai Media City, The Gardens and Jebel Ali Village – each an enormous planned community of commerce, residence, and recreation, in varying combinations – lie on

³⁹ The term “edutainment” proliferates in the marketing materials of Ibn Battuta Shopping Mall, including the IBSM website, a brochure available in the shopping center, and on numerous displays aimed at both “educating” and “entertaining” mall patrons.

⁴⁰ http://www.retailfix.com/featured_Callison_Ibn.cf

either side of the Sheikh Zayed superhighway⁴¹. The monumental land reclamation projects and outré playgrounds of Dubai's coastline – the Palms (of which there are three) and the World, each visible from outerspace – are similarly located nearby in varying stages of construction. But for tourists, residents, and expatriate workers alike, Ibn Battuta Mall is a shopping (or, more often than not, window-shopping) destination of choice⁴².

Getting to the mall is no mean feat, and in the absence of private transportation, a hired taxi is among the few public options. Several hotel shuttles offer 'free' rides to IBSM, while mall workers are bussed to and from a few collection points around Dubai by employer-contracted buses. At approximately 30 kilometers southwest of Dubai's commercial center of Deira and the nearby residential/commercial area of Bur Dubai, a cab ride to the mall costs an average \$50 USD roundtrip (or 183.65 Dirhams at 3.67 AED = 1 USD); an expensive proposition as a prelude to any activity, particularly shopping.

Low slung, with a crenellated exterior, the shopping mall is built to suggest a fortress. Six external entrances, each clad in culturally "specific" décor, lead to the six "courts" of the mall – Andalusia, Tunisia, Egypt, Persia, India, and China, oriented from west to east, selectively representing spaces of encounter in the travels of Ibn Battuta. External detailing is focused around the entrances, including the striking blue dome of the Persia Court, varyingly clad in dust and sand blown in from Al Ain and Abu Dhabi.

⁴¹ The recent high-rise development along the narrow corridor of Sheikh Zayed Road, where only one prominent multi-story structure stood fifteen years ago, has itself become emblematic of Dubai's stunning (and stunningly rapid) transformations.

⁴² I utilized taxis during much of the research in Dubai. The one shopping center I was most frequently asked by drivers if I had visited (among the many options) was consistently Ibn Battuta Mall. When I asked, in turn, why they chose this mall to mention when there are so many others, I received several responses within a similar theme: while they would go somewhere else to make a purchase, many noted the architecture as contributing to the feeling of a special place. One taxi driver, from Pakistan, recommended I go there "to learn about Islam."

Upon entering any of the doorways, a spectacular artifact or architectural feature dominates the scene. The China Court (also housing the “food court”) boasts a full-sized junk, ornately painted and with billowing sails, in homage both to an ill-fated ship on which Ibn Battuta set sail from Calcutta in A.D. 1341 (Dunn 1986) and the sailing ships of Zheng He⁴³, “Admiral of the Western Seas” who’s extensive voyages throughout the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean in the century prior to Columbus remain virtually unknown outside Asia and East Africa (Fig. 31). The tiled, blue, dome of the Persia Court, even more lofty and spectacular when viewed from within the mall, houses a seemingly incongruous Starbucks, dwarfed by the scale of the surrounding architecture (Fig. 32).



Fig. 31. China court, Ibn Battuta Mall, Dubai (July 2006).

⁴³ He, a eunuch, native of landlocked Yunnan province, and Muslim, is particularly noteworthy for having led multiple expeditions to the East African coast throughout the 15th century in enormous ships carrying tens of thousands of men. Among the most celebrated gifts Zheng He received on behalf of the Chinese emperor, which were then transported back to China, was a giraffe from the area of present-day Somalia (http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/articles.php?searchterm=002_zhenghe.inc&issue=002, accessed July 13, 2007).



Fig. 32. Persia Court Starbucks, Ibn Battuta Mall, Dubai (July 2006).

Ibn Battuta is home, primarily, to a familiar retinue of global clothing and footwear retailers: Polo, Lacoste, Fila, Forever 21, Ocean Pacific, Skechers, La Senza, Nine West, The Athlete's Foot; and specialized shops including *abaya* boutiques, a musical instrument store specializing in stringed lutes or *oud*, and the deliciously ubiquitous oil-based perfume shops (also *oud*) of Arabia. The mall's real standout is, however, its earnest attempts to "edutain" via numerous exhibits and interactive learning centers. With maps – including large scale floor maps of the Indian Ocean basin, diagrams of noteworthy inventions, models of fabulous creations, charts outlining timelines of notable historical activities, photographs, artifacts, 'authentic' architectural detailing, and extensive text rhapsodizing all of the above, the mall's creators have taken great pains to shed light on the achievements of Ibn Battuta and other 'notable' Muslims – all men – whose activities are perceived as having been written out of much of 'world history.' Despite (or because of?) it's Vegas-inspired artifice, Ibn Battuta offers perhaps

the world's first and only, or at the very least, the largest and most extravagant, self-consciously postcolonial mall⁴⁴.

Or is it? With Ibn Battuta as trope - an historical embodiment of achievement, glory, and success of the Global South - the mall itself takes great pains to ensure that shoppers reflect on the man, his modernity, and remarkable progressiveness at a time when all of the New World, Africa, and much of Asia itself remained unknown in Europe. In focusing on Ibn Battuta, the mall's creators, however problematically, offer a narrative of world history in which Europe and the West (with the exception of Muslim "al-Andalus") is absent in the twin spectacles of architecture and exhibitions. Rather, the cultural and spatial focus privileges the networks and linkages, through the personage of one man, between Africa, Arabia, and Asia. That this solemn celebration, infused as it is with a determination to "make learning fun," takes shape in a modern desert *souq*, surrounded by textiles, clothing, perfumes, and footwear, all chillingly air-conditioned, ensures that it is both well-visited and, in its own way, contradictory. Attempts to suppress the Occident are rather less rigorous in the garish displays of consumer temptation thoroughly present in the mall's overwhelmingly Western-owned shopping outlets – its true *raison d'être*. Thus you are welcome to browse and buy from over

⁴⁴ While, given the focus of this project, I do not engage specifically with the substantial literature on mall spaces, it is worth noting the work of Goss 1993, 1999, Morris 1998, Gökarişel 2003) for their contributions regarding the important links between malls, consumption, and the subjectivities and imaginaries mutually constituted within mall spaces. As Goss expresses, invoking Benjamin, "If The Mall fulfills vital religious and psychological functions in contemporary culture by bringing together collective myth and individual memory and fantasy, it also performs a modern secular function, for collective dreams are economic as well as spiritual and libidinal in content. That is, The Mall responds to the felt inadequacies of the social product and alienation in the social order of production, expressing deep fears we hold about the relationship between the alienated form of the object and the destruction of nature, culture, the past and the city (Benjamin 1985:44-45) (1999:71). In the example of Ibn Battuta Mall, this coming together of myth, memory, and fantasy in its recasting of a glorious world in which Africa and Asia provide the sum of global spatialities, the mall space is itself invigorated by traders, like Khadija, who embody a particularly situated reworking of this otherwise static myth. I contrast Ibn Battuta with Dubai's DragonMart in the following chapter.

65,000 products in the 200,000 square foot hypermarket of French retailer Géant, catch a showing of Spiderman 3 at the twenty-screen Grand Megaplex, and pick up the latest in pre-teen pajamas at La Senza Girl, while contemplating the long-forgotten history of vibrant Asia-Africa exchanges and reading enough of the displays to exit with sufficient knowledge of Ibn Battuta to exclaim, surprised: “It’s not just a mall, it’s a person?!”⁴⁵

Are Kenyans present in Ibn Battuta Mall? For the most part - no⁴⁶. While I did encounter two Kenyans who made the voyage to the outskirts of Dubai to experience Ibn Battuta (via the Hilton Dubai Creek complimentary guest shuttle, through the connections of a Kenyan friend who works with the hotel), few of the East African ‘tourists’ registered in Dubai venture to such upscale shopping centers, as interviewees were quick to point out. Those involved in the “Dubai clothes” trade in Kenya rarely, if ever, enter such malls and instead focus their energies on the open air *souqs* of Deira and Bur Dubai to find affordable stock for their shops (Catherine, personal interview 16 July 2006, Yusuf, personal interview 19 June 2006). Thus I only rarely met East Africans not only in Ibn Battuta, but in the arguably more upmarket Bur Juman Shopping Centre, The Mall of the Emirates (the “world’s first shopping resort” and home to a well-publicized indoor ski slope), Mercato Mall, and Madinat Jumeirah, whose shops and price points reflect the purchasing power of a consumer with considerable disposable income and a penchant for shopping for oneself. Likewise, these sites are located outside Deira, the urban core of

⁴⁵ A quote overheard in the ‘China Court,’ as expressed in conversation by a British couple on holiday in Dubai.

⁴⁶ I did, however, meet several Kenyan expatriate workers who staffed various stores, one of whom worked at Ibn Battuta, one as a photographer in the ski slope of the Mall of the Emirates, and several others employed at Deira City Centre. As noted earlier, Kenya’s presence in the Dubai expatriate worker community is comparatively small, but nonetheless substantial. Their experiences are, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this paper.

Dubai, where most Africans (and the businesses that cater to them) are located⁴⁷. Many of the research participants are, however, aware of the mall (including individuals in both Nairobi and Mombasa who had never been to Dubai).

For Khadija, asking me about the mall, it turned out, emerged not from a particular conjecture of unexpected clarity, in which she drew parallels between herself and the project (of South-South travel, shopping, clothing, and Islam) expressed by Ibn Battuta Mall. When we talked about this further, however, she reflected on her experiences and, laughing, noted that now there are so many Muslims traveling and trading between Africa and Asia (many friends and family members were engaged in various businesses too), there was little chance of a celebratory “Khadija Shopping Centre” commemorating the exceptional travels of a Muslim woman from Africa to Arabia. Then, she realized, she already had this, in a tiny fraction of the square footage, in Mombasa (personal interview, 5 July 2006, Dubai).

Islam, Identity, and Transnational Trade

Recent scholarship on Ibn Battuta (Cornell 2005, Zaman 2005), and on Muslim networks (Diouf 2000, Cooke and Lawrence 2005) of which the trade in “Dubai clothes” is part, notes the paucity of research on historical and contemporary connections within the Global South. Among the common bonds characterizing these ties are shared economic and cultural imperatives. Through these connections, the social and fiscal are always intertwined.

⁴⁷ This information is obtained via interviews and participant observation and supported by Department of Tourism statistics that indicate most African visitors stay in one and two star hotels – nearly all of which are located in Deira.

Networks share similarities with institutionalized social relations, including political dynasties and tribal affiliations, but are nevertheless distinctive, “because to be networked entails making a choice to be connected across recognized boundaries” (Cooke and Lawrence 2005:1). To speak of “Muslim networks” is to recognize exchanges and transnational interactions taking place in a social world that, while characterized by the Muslim faith, includes interactions among people of many beliefs, in areas in which Muslims are not always dominant nor in which a singular notion of Islam is ever present. While the “networked nature of Islam,” and the effects of Muslim networks on global history, are both “pivotal...neither has received its due from scholars” (ibid.). Characterizing Muslim networks as both “medium and method,” the authors highlight theoretical approaches to transnational connections that are necessarily spatial but not space bound and which suggest a series of creative responses to global systems (2005).

Historically, trade networks were extensive between Asia and Africa and across the Indian Ocean between Africa, Arabia, and elsewhere in Asia prior to the advent of Islam. Muslim traders built on these networks (2005:5). Transnational trade in and between these regions depended on a willingness and an ability to travel, coupled with the requisite security to permit people to move in and between disparate worlds with a modicum of safety. This requirement attests to the need to foreground variability in power, class, and gender, together with religious and linguistic identities, in attempting to understand the whos, whats, wheres, and whys of these historical passages. Being Muslim, a man, a scholar, well versed in Arabic, and with a particularly “noble” patrician

background, all offered a clear advantage, unsurprisingly, in travel throughout the trade networks of Africa and Asia in the 14th century.

Travel, and its intersection with varying claims to Islam, remains a consistent trope in the Western Indian Ocean. Arguably few people have been linked so thoroughly with transnational travel and exchange than the millions of pilgrims who make the annual Hajj⁴⁸ – one of the only international networks of its size and scope in which women’s participation has been traditionally recognized (Cooke and Lawrence 2005:3). Of the Kenyan Muslim research participants who had the opportunity to travel to Dubai, nearly all had or were soon planning to perform the *hajj*⁴⁹. One participant, however, noted that he could neither afford to avoid Dubai while in Arabia but nor could he determine if a pre-*hajj* or post-*hajj* buying trip seemed more appropriate, spiritually-speaking (Hamad, personal interview 4 April 2006, Nairobi).

Hajj routes “overlay the multiple networks of traders, travelers, and seekers of knowledge” connecting Muslims to one another and to non-Muslims transiting the same paths (2005:3). Engseng Ho, in his historical study of Indian Ocean diaspora acknowledges that this confluence of commerce and transnational identities associated with “newly energized trade route[s] and the new Muslim polities along [them] made possible the celebrated travels of Ibn Battuta” (2006:100). A similar effect is engendered

⁴⁸ The Hajj itself offers a compelling imbrication of trade and identity, old and new networks, and textiles and apparel in the example of *ihram*. Plain, white, and resembling a looped-terry cloth bath sheet, *ihram* is wrapped around worshipper’s bodies to eradicate other indices of class and status, allowing all, evenly humbled, to be equal before God. Even in this holiest of pursuits, a corporeal clash with global commodity chains is evident. According to the prominent labels of the *ihram* I saw, purchased by Swahili pilgrims during Hajj and brought back to Kenya to one day become their burial shrouds, these most spiritual of garments are, like most “Dubai clothes,” “made in China.”

⁴⁹ Not all, of course, were particularly pious and, while Muslim, were not practicing. It was from one such self-described individual and particularly frequent traveler to Dubai that I learned the phrase: *Msafiri kafiri*, or “A traveler is an infidel.” Some, to avoid daily prayers while on the road, invokes this idea.

in the Dubai clothes trade. As noted in Ibn Battuta's travel narrative or *rihla*, those who traveled in these networks, and the processes of transmission and transformation they heralded, did so in large part with the material assistance of the global *umma*, or community of believers, bound together by shared aspects of Islam and a reputed band of trust upon which transnational exchange could thrive (Dunn 1986)⁵⁰. Muslims and Christians alike, who travel to Dubai and avail themselves of various Somali-based services in the process, invoked this trust. One research participant wondered, with the move toward China by some traders, if this particular aspect of doing business in the Gulf could be sustained in less familiar territory (Mary, personal interview, 8 April 2006, Nairobi). As the mall displays purport, Battuta himself extended his network to China and, through his continuing reliance on Muslim networks, found a continuing livelihood. Today others are not so sure.

In contemporary Dubai, Ibn Battuta serves, in part, as slick marketing trick (exacerbated by his depiction throughout the mall as "Indiana Jones" complete with a poster reminiscent of the film, but with turban substituted for fedora) (Fig. 33), while reflecting a less cynical and increasingly profound emphasis on the non-Western ties that bind. While acknowledging a disquieting pairing of over-the-top sensationalism and earnest historicizing Khadija could only describe as "American," Ibn Battuta Mall nevertheless offers a "global" narrative (if not delivery) lacking a referent to the West. Despite herself, Khadija found the end result compelling, if for none other than the

⁵⁰ The common ideals and social codes underlain by an unwavering trust as described by the *rihla*, are among same characteristics widely described as animating the contemporary Somali global money exchange system or *xawilaad*, noted above. The success of *xawilaad*, as reported by my interviewees and other scholarship on this system (Little 2003, Horst 2004) is attributed to Islam and, specifically, its moral imperative of trust coupled with its pragmatic approach to commerce.

novelty of a vast mall celebrating an ancient Muslim jurist. (personal interview, 5 July 2006, Dubai)

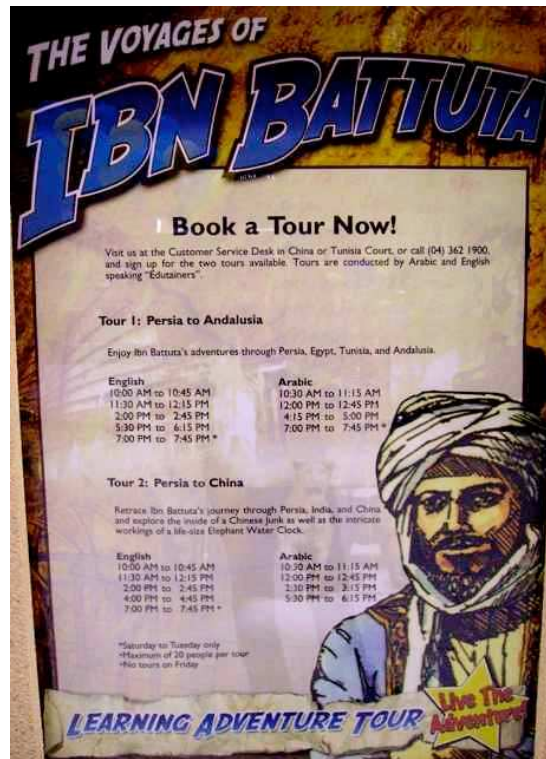


Fig. 33. Ibn Battuta “Jones,” Ibn Battuta Mall, Dubai (July 2006).

The transnational nature of the Ibn Battuta narrative provides a conceptual counterpoint to the life experiences shared by the research participants in navigating the interstices between Africa and Asia. In the transnational hagiography presented in the malls exhibits, detailing, layout, and architecture, a meta-narrative is realized that, despite a seeming desire to the contrary, seeks to fix Asia-Africa connections as an intriguing, albeit remote, past.

In a similar vein, Swahili histories emphasize a past transnationality privileging history over present possibilities (see Chapter 5). As told, over centuries and through

spatially dispersed settlements linked to one another and to areas across the Indian Ocean through travel, trade, and shared religious practice, East Africa's Swahili community is characterized by a spatiality inclusive of areas outside their political and continental borders. While it is important to acknowledge as problematic the view of an African community literally turning its back on its continent⁵¹, the idea of "looking East" has increasing relevance in Kenya as understood in the context of its conceptual and geographic opposite: the West. Swahili actors, including Khadija, participate in this reorientation, and enjoy the advantages that come from operating within Islamic networks of trade and exchange as a fellow Muslim. These spaces are not, however, exclusive (provided one has the capital to generate a business and, in this respect, garment imports provide an attractive business model due to its perceived lower costs - Yusuf, personal interview, 19 June 2006), nor exclusively Muslim. Nor are they limited to areas, like Dubai, within the "Muslim world."

Nevertheless, religion and a series of idealized cultural ties believed to characterize a shared faith, are described by the research participants as contributing to the creation of a transnational trade in garments linking Africa with Asia. While this current trade began through the established refugee and migrant connections linking East Africa (both Somali and Swahili) to the Gulf, it has since expanded beyond and through Dubai. While its earliest participants and proponents were themselves Muslim, the activity has expanded to include other groups, who nonetheless rely on the trust and security they attribute to the trade's foundations, however tenuous, in Islam. Through their engagements, the research participants narrate a transnational ontology that is

⁵¹ Neville Chittick relied on this imagery in his seminal history of Kilwa on the Tanzanian coast: "it was seaward that the cities of the coast faced, looking out over the great maritime region constituted by the Indian Ocean and its coasts" (1974:245).

neither cautionary nor celebratory but rather matter-of-fact. It is not presented as unusual that African entrepreneurs would travel the world (or significant parts of it) pursuing their business. By destabilizing Western-held notions of global African engagement, these small, personal interventions are potentially revelatory. These traders evidence the comingling of multiple imaginaries of globalization in which their participation mutually constitutes transformations in the cultural and economic landscapes (of consumption) and signals broader shifts in trading relationships beyond those limited to the European colonial period. And with the Kenyan state increasingly following their lead (Chapter 7), these traders are extending their purview further east.

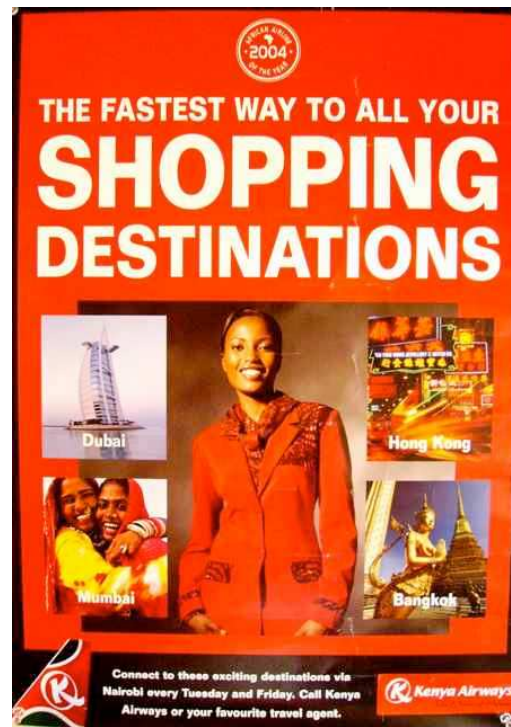


Fig.34. Kenya Airways: “The Fastest Way to All Your Shopping Destinations: Dubai, Mumbai, Hong Kong, Bangkok”

As Zeinab noted in the quote opening this chapter, for Swahili, Dubai has replaced Zanzibar as *the* site of possibilities, promise, and wonder (and, specifically, for

shopping – Fig. 34). Whereas Zanzibar was once “the Paris of East Africa” (Fair 2004, also see Chapter 2), setting trends and dictating chic fashion, Dubai now provides the benchmark for sartorial elegance amongst Swahili women whose shared penchants for *udi* and *buibui* (*abaya*) provide a comfortable livelihood for entrepreneurs like Khadija, whose embeddedness in the cultural milieux of Africa-Arab exchange provides unparalleled advantages in the business of style.

Farouq, by contrast, began his successive businesses in a less forgiving atmosphere, outside the connectivities that smoothed the spaces of transnational trade for Khadija. Sensing the opportunities offered in Eastleigh, as a non-Muslim, he carefully cultivated a network of patrons and contacts, working his way into a space in Garissa Lodge. His eventual conversion to Islam, name change, and Somali wife helped establish his presence in the competitive environment of Eastleigh’s shopping malls. By pooling resources with fellow traders, Farouq maintains increased “quality control” over his stock and is reasonably assured that in the near future, he too will travel to Dubai (personal interview, 22 March 2006, Eastleigh).

For Yusuf, whose mother had a dressmaking school for thirty years and encouraged his interest in fashion, Dubai is no longer the opportunity it once was. While he began sourcing in India due to family ties⁵², the future is even further afield. From Dubai, where he shifted after India, quickly aware that his clientele of Swahili women “go for modern” and the cotton clothes produced in India did not fit the bill, he has now

⁵² He quickly ended his shopping trips to India after realizing that the products did not have a market in Mombasa. When I asked why, he responded with further evidence of the East African love for synthetics “They go for modern and cotton is not modern. In India, all you can get is cotton. In India, they sell what’s produced locally. If something’s from Hong Kong, it’s a big deal.” Signaling a changing aesthetic he did go on to note that “Nowadays most of my clients do not like shiny clothes.” (Yusuf, personal interview 19 June 2006).

moved east to Bangkok (specifically Pratunam) (Yusuf, personal interview, 19 June 2006, Mombasa). Given that his “Dubai clothes” are now bought in Bangkok where, he noted, shops are very flexible and offer small traders wholesale prices for as few as three garments, he is able to sell clothing in his Mombasa shop for prices “cheaper than in Dubai.” As he describes, “In Dubai there are two kinds of shopping you can do: junk or classy, very cheap or very expensive. Since the clothes in Dubai are coming from Bangkok, and from China, this way I can see what’s really available and buy better quality.” Nor is a movement beyond Dubai difficult for an East African, as “There are many Kenyans [in Bangkok], and I can use the same shippers. The Somalis are already there.” (personal interview, 19 June 2006, Mombasa). In this respect, Yusuf shares more in common with an increasing cohort of his fellow traders for whom Dubai, while having offered an easy entrée into the world of transnational apparel trade, no longer suffices.

Kenyans in Dubai, revisited

Entering a shop in the Karama district of Bur Dubai, in the Emirate of Dubai, I paused to appreciate the shade offered by the shop’s interior. An audible rattle signaled an old air conditioning unit offering slight, but welcome, relief from the 40 plus degree heat outside (and the relentless hawkers stage-whispering to passersby “Prada. Gucci. DVDs – I have “LOST”). Along an open-air corridor of small stores spanning the ground floor of a series of buildings on opposing sides of the street, the shop was not unlike its neighbors, offering new, youthful clothing – fashionable polyester blouses, various shades and cuts of acid-washed jeans, ankle-length tiered peasant skirts, handbags, sunglasses, and admittedly cheap looking leather jackets. I glanced around, wandering

through the racks and touching the material, marveling at the persistent popularity of synthetic fabrics in such searing heat. The young man staffing the shop greeted me in English and asked if he could be of any assistance. As I was seeking information rather than garments in this encounter, I explained that I was visiting Dubai from Kenya, where I had been living. “*Ninajua Kiswahili – habari yako?*” he asked, greeting my initial shock with a grin: “I speak Swahili – how are you?”

Yakub, 29 years old in 2006, is Iranian and, with his older brother who owns the store, had been serving East African shoppers from this Karama setting throughout his four years in Dubai. According to Yakub, “a few years ago, there were *so many* Kenyans in Dubai. I had so many African customers, especially Kenyans. They like to dress like Americans – black Americans – with jeans, t-shirts.” In not only his shop (where they would spend far less), but throughout the Emirate, “they [Kenyans] would come and spend 30, or even 50 thousand dollars in Dubai [What were they buying?] Everything! Refrigerators, cars, clothes...[Why here in Dubai?] Why? Because they have nothing in Africa,” he stated emphatically. I mentioned that, while life can be very difficult, there are *some* things to be had in Kenya. He seized upon my difficulty comment and noted, with concern, that he “thought Kenya would be doing better now that there is a new president...Tanzania is doing so well now because it’s connected to Arabs. [How so?] Tanzania, Zanzibar, is the gateway to Africa for Arabs. Zanzibar has a long history with Arabs, and with Persians. Did you know that Persians, during the time of the secular king, went to Zanzibar for religious freedom [Does this relate to Shirazi ancestry spoken of in East Africa?] Yes! Shiraz!” OK then, I asked Yakub, where are all these Kenyans

now? His response was immediate -“they’ve discovered China.” (Yakub, personal interview, 14 July 2003)

Chapter 7:

Re-orienting Africa

International City is surrounded by vast expanses of desert, east of Dubai city. Fiercely blowing sand scours the occasional billboard and the exposed surfaces of a lonely petrol station. As the taxi speeds forward, leaving even these few outposts behind, a long, low apparition begins to take shape in the distance. Adjacent to the Hatta/Oman Road, beyond Emirates Road Interchange Number 5, the car screeches to a halt at the front doors of the sprawling “China market¹” – Dragon Mart.

As “Your Business Gateway to China,” Dragon Mart “provides a convenient way for you to do business with China, without having to go to China!” (Dragon Mart brochure 2006). Opened in December 2004 as among the “biggest strategic business projects” between the United Arab Emirates and the People’s Republic of China, Dragon Mart “offers businesses and traders from the Middle East, Africa, and Eastern Europe a convenient window to do business with nearly thousands of qualified Chinese manufacturers and enterprises.” (ibid.). Offering wholesale and retail trading, and befitting its location in Dubai where most everything is characterized by superlatives, Dragon Mart “is the largest China Trade project of its kind in the world.”

¹ Taxi drivers were more familiar with this term than the official name, “Dragon Mart.”

The structure, while without frills, is nevertheless notable for its undulating dragon design, evident in plan view (Fig. 35). Spread over 50 hectares² and shaped, ostensibly, to resemble a dragon, the market comprises eleven octagonal segments, curving between a two-story multi-sided “head”(housing a satellite office of Jebel Ali Free Zone and the first of many shops) and a comparatively diminutive “tail” offering “General Merchandise.” The market is accessed through the dragon’s “mouth,” leading to a large multi-colored schematic inside the doors. Beyond the light filled entranceway are 3,950 shops (not yet all occupied) showcasing Chinese manufacture radiating off a central artery snaking its way through the dragon. Welcome to the belly of the global commodity beast.

² The 1.2 km long Dragon Mart complex includes 150,000 square meters of wholesale/retail space, an adjacent 30,000 square meters within eight warehouses, and 25 residential buildings for traders “featuring 1,840 fully furnished studio, one and two bedroom apartments.” Warehousing and residences are located within 200 meters of the market proper (<http://www.hays.com/jobs/nakheel/development.html#DragonMartComplex>).

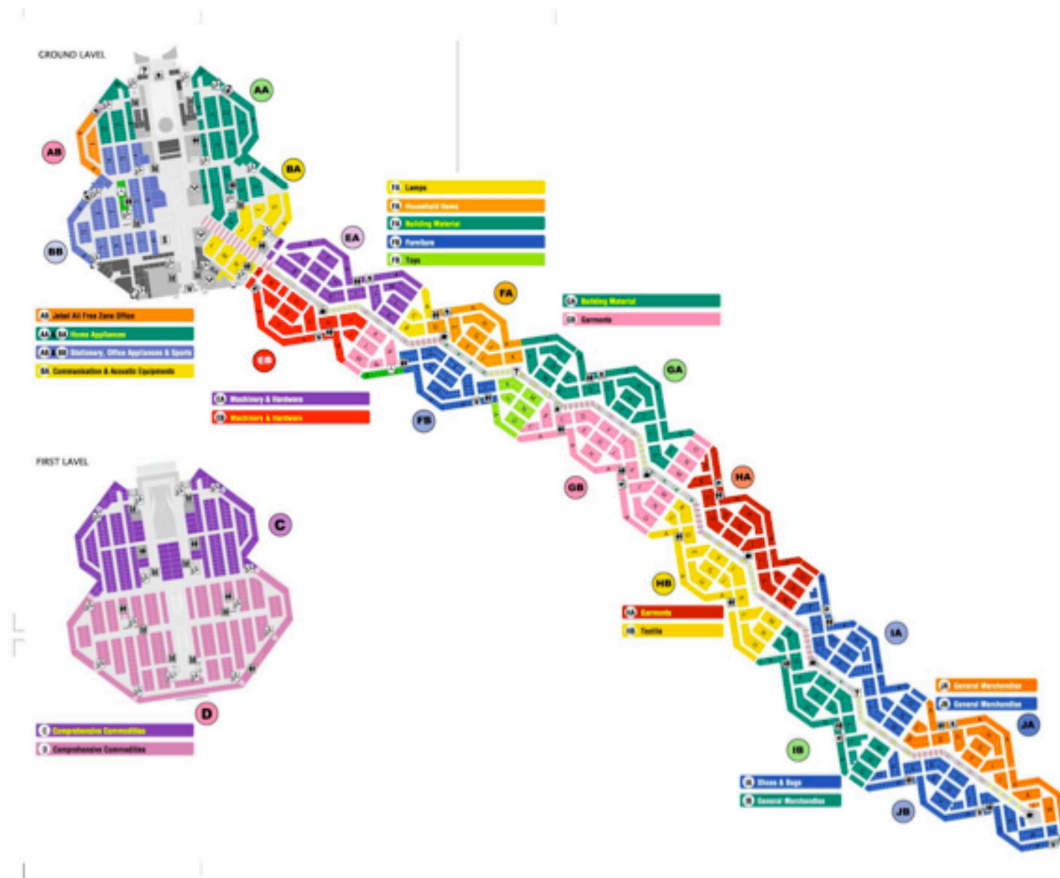


Fig. 35. Dragon Mart, International City, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
Source: <http://www.chinamexmart.com/english/images/bigmap.jpg>

While Dragon Mart’s uniqueness is perhaps self-evident, its importance is clearly linked to the perceived opportunity the market “offers customers from the Middle East and Africa”³. The bare hallways, enlivened only slightly by the occasional soft drink seller, and filled with a steady trickle of potential shoppers, project a starkly commercial demeanor. Unlike within the stunning shopping malls elsewhere in Dubai, few Emirati families are in evidence. Those strolling the corridors bypass “machinery and hardware” and “building materials,” pausing to peruse handbags and footwear at shops that are well

³ Quoted from the property developer’s (al Nakheel) website: http://www.nakheel.com/Developments/International_City/Dragon_Mart/. Nakheel is also the developer of Ibn Battuta Mall (and many of Dubai’s extravagant spectacles).

stocked for retail sales. In its absence of embellishments, Dragon Mart offers both an antithesis to the extravagantly sumptuous shopping malls elsewhere in Dubai and a suggested apotheosis of transnational shopping experiences in the 21st century.

The market is segmented into zones corresponding to ten “enterprises”: 1) building materials, 2) furniture, 3) toys, 4) shoes and bags, 5) general merchandise, 6) lamps and household, 7) machinery and hardware, 8) stationary and office supplies, 9) home appliances, and 10) garments and textiles. It is in this latter category (and shoes and bags) that the wholesale and retail trade is particularly brisk and the customers overwhelmingly African (Jin Qin Ying, personal interview, 18 July 2006, Dubai).

For Joseph, a trader from Nairobi with a clothes stall in Garissa in Eastleigh, Dragon Mart offers a potential future foray into garment sourcing from manufacturers.

“Now, I’m looking in Deira [the commercial center of Dubai] and searching for clothes – skirts, tops, jeans – to send to Kenya. This is my first time in Dubai. Today I’m here [Dragon Mart] to see only...For these places, maybe you need big orders. I want only few things – everyone wants [something] unique now in Kenya. If you come with too many same things, people are unhappy. That’s why even now they are liking *mitumba* more in Kenya. But still people like something that’s new. It makes them feel good – even stylish. That’s why I’m coming to Dubai. (Joseph, personal interview, 1 August 2006, Dubai).

Looking East

In a foreword to the recent World Bank publication “Africa’s Silk Road,” the WB’s regional vice president for Africa, Gobind Nankani sets the following scene: “The dramatic new trend in South-South economic relations is transforming traditional patterns of economic development, and this is nowhere more evident than in African-Asian trade and investment flows. Indeed, while China and India emerge as economic giants in Asia, Africa is coming into its own, finding a vital link in this transformation (2007:xix). In

keeping with the assertion that the “acceleration of South-South trade and investment is one of the most significant features of recent developments in the global economy” (Broadman 2007:1), Broadman indicates that Chinese FDI in Africa grew by 327% in 2003-2004 (compared to a 13% growth rate in Europe, by contrast) (ibid.:97). While petroleum and mineral extraction in Sudan and Nigeria reflect the bulk of this investment, manufacturing, particularly textiles and apparel, and services, including shipping and transport, constitute the major secondary tier of Asian FDI in Africa (2007: 12, 94-97). Similarly, trade between Africa and Asia is intensifying, with African export to Asia increasing by 20 percent from 2000-2005 (compared with 15 percent from 1990-1995). Asian exports to Africa are rapidly increasing, growing at an 18 percent annual rate from 2000-2005, “higher than that of any other region” (2007:12). These exports are largely manufactured goods, “which have surged into African markets.” (ibid.). Mawdsley reads these changing Sino-African relations, and how the West responds to them, “as a very important marker of the changing geographies of power” (2007).

The Kenyan government is seeking to operationalize these deepening connections through a bilateral policy of “Looking East” (Kabukuru 2006, Oluoch 2006). In 1995, Kenyan president Mwai Kibaki returned from a visit to the PRC with \$8 million in grants and \$27 million in loans earmarked for infrastructural improvements and development expenditure. Chinese President Hu Jintao’s arrival in Kenya in 2006 ended with seven financial agreements for economic and technical cooperation, trade, and educational exchange programs (Oluoch 2006:22). In 2004, while reeling from US and EU travel restrictions that had greatly reduced tourist arrivals from Kenya’s “traditional” markets, China granted Kenya “Approved Destination Status” (ADS) for outbound Chinese tour

groups, opening the way for Chinese group tours and thus providing a critical step toward boosting the number of Chinese tourists in East Africa⁴ (Xinhua 2006). State-run Chinese television now broadcasts daily Chinese language programming on Kenya's KBC station, China Radio International established its first FM station outside China in Nairobi in February 2006, China has declared Mombasa port its "gateway to East Africa" – edging out Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, and Kenya Airways (KQ) has secured landing rights to an increasing number of Chinese cities (Oluoch 2006:18).

Comments by Kenya Airways Group CEO Titus Naikuni reflect an emergent interest in and enthusiasm for China in Kenya: "Our [KQ's] quest to be the leading player from Africa in the Far East has progressed. We have ventured into Guangzhou, the business capital, where we proceeded to airlift over 8000 business people from Africa who were thirsty for opportunities in China." (ibid.). While the Kenyan state is "Looking East" since the inception of the Kibaki government's 2005 policy, Kenyan textile and garment entrepreneurs, in the myriad small yet meaningful ways suggested by this project, have been laying the groundwork for these intensified South-South links in the everyday practices of the cloth and clothing trade.

Globalization re-oriented

The past decade has been dominated by discourses of "globalization" (Harvey 1989, Appadurai 1996, Sassen 1998, Hirst and Thompson 1999, Dicken 2003). As a degree of global economic integration that is new in intensity if not altogether novel in practice, economic globalization has succeeded in supplanting the buzzwords of the past

⁴ As a result, Kenya experienced a "doubling" of visiting Chinese arrivals within the year, although the number of total Chinese visitors to Kenya remains small (from 2,600 in 2002, to 11,000 in 2005, compared to more than 300,000 visitors from the U.K. in 2005) (Kenya Statistical Abstract 2006).

few decades of economic policy formulation in East Africa, as elsewhere. Rather than import substitution, the dominant discussion in Kenya now is one of Export Processing Zones as a means of integrating with global markets. Instead of paring back regulation (in the form of state power) to a bare minimum as was the strategy under structural adjustment programs at their height, there is increasing discussion of the ways in which regulatory policies might support increased global integration as expressed in the shorthand of globalization. This regulation may take the form of regional or more often “global regulatory meta-narratives” (Amin 2004:219).

Economic globalization is perhaps less meaningful as a development strategy than a spatial ontology (Amin 2004) or a disabling discourse (Hart 2002). In other words, the term “globalization” lacks explanatory power in the absence of critical historical and contemporary contextualizations detailing its specificities. In the last ten years, during which globalization has generated such discursive momentum, interdependencies between places are being reshaped, as is evidenced by the articulation of the international clothing systems at work in Kenya. These integrative spatialities of apparel are reflected not only in changing economic relations with places as far-flung as Gujarati *khanga* factories, Wal-Mart production negotiations in Bentonville, Arkansas and the clothing discarded by fashionable Milanese transformed as *mitumba*, but at scales as intimate as the clothed body and as seemingly vast as the WTO.

In Kenya, established colonial patterns of trade, particularly the export of primary commodities including tea, coupled with more recent exports of cut flowers, continued to drive expanding trade with Europe until recently. While the European Economic Community was the destination for 47.6 percent of Kenya’s exports in 1988, this share

declined to 31 percent in 1998 (Republic of Kenya Economic Survey 1999) and 27 percent to the European Union in 2005 (Economic Survey 2006).

Africa, by contrast, provided a market for 25.6% of Kenya's exports in 1988, increasing to 46.4% in 1998 (ibid.). By 2005, Africa constituted the largest destination for Kenyan exports by value (120 million Ksh), increasing to 49.2% of total export value generated (the United States, by contrast, imported 6 million Ksh of Kenyan goods) (Economic Survey 2006:130). Given the tax incentives, concessions, and enormous public expenditure in Kenya associated with the development of the outward processing garment sector in the EPZs, these figures suggest the importance of regional African (and Asian) networks of trade, which up to now tend to be diminished by narratives of globalization emphasizing the West. The trade relationships within which Kenya is embedded and through which it shapes its global linkages thus increasingly reflect a contraction of colonial (and neocolonial) dependencies and a concomitant rise in the importance of Asia and Africa.

Though Kenyan policies have, until recently, continued to be created with a "Western" focus, the emergent "Looking East" policy suggests this emphasis is shifting. As such Kenya represents the new "battlefield" of diplomatic, economic, and political competition between "East" and "West," currently intensifying in Africa (Mawdsley 2007). Renewed efforts at regional cooperation through a revitalized (as of 1999) and expanded (as of 2007) East African Community (including Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda

and Burundi), suggest a related shift in South-South geographies⁵ and a continuing challenge to globalization orthodoxies which position the West as the narrative center.

Thus in the midst of these transformations, one new trend in Kenya is actually among the oldest – a strengthening of trade networks and relations throughout sub-Saharan Africa and between Africa and Asia.. The discussion above may be seen as an effort to draw attention to these possibilities, as changes in industrial production are linked to national consumption patterns and regional transformations occurring “beneath” Northern-oriented analyses of globalization.

Representations of Africa, revisited

As I conclude this project in the summer of 2007, the international U.S.-based periodical *Vanity Fair* offers an “unprecedented” issue focused singularly on AFRICA. Musician and activist Bono, the first guest-editor in the magazine’s 46 year history, assembled articles (on AIDS), interviews (Bill Clinton, in conversation with Nelson Mandela), investigative reportage (China’s power grab in Africa), and music coverage (MTV and Malian desert festivals)⁶. The July 2007 issue features a similarly “unprecedented” cover – 20 unique options (buy them all!) featuring 21 individuals in pairs or trios intimating “a visual chain letter” about Africa⁷. For a publication that deems

⁵ Indicative of these shifts from West to East, the EAC website notes its primary trading partners as “the European Union, Japan, China, India, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia” (http://www.eac.int/about_eac.htm).

⁶ <http://www.vanityfair.com/magazine>

⁷ The *Vanity Fair* covers, shot by Annie Leibovitz, include: supermodel Iman Abdulmajid, Jordan’s Queen Rania Al-Abdullah, boxer Muhammad Ali, poet Maya Angelou, Bono, tycoon Warren Buffet, President George W. Bush, philanthropists Bill and Melinda Gates; actors George Clooney Don Cheadle, Djimon Hounsou, Brad Pitt, and Chris Rock; musicians Jay-Z, Alicia Keys, and Madonna; Senator Barack Obama, Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice; Archbishop Desmond Tutu; and impresario Oprah Winfrey.

itself “the magazine world’s monthly gauge of the modern age,”⁸ the message is clear – Africa is *au courant*.

Yet despite Bono’s self-described intentions to recast discussions of Africa away from the doom and gloom that figure most prominently in global coverage of the continent, the special issue largely furthers the bleak scenario of a population unable to help itself, though offered some (great white) hope in the form of Jeffrey Sachs, amongst others⁹. *Vanity Fair* is thus among the latest, and glossiest, of Western representations of Africa, rife with paternalistic concern and Hollywood altruism, wherein Africa and Africans are cast by others as deeply in need.

Globalization discourses in which Africa is either absent or “inconvenient” foster a continuing representation of Africa as corrupt, marginal, poorly governed, lacking transparency, a basket case, and/or a continent of failed states (Adedeji 1993, Paolini 1997, Bayart 2000, Arrighi 2002, Ferguson 2006). These ontological suppositions characterizing Western engagement with Africa are generated through a pervasive framework of economic and cultural debt and dependency. The persistence of these epistemological approaches to Africa is reflected among the passengers on any given flight to the continent from points west and north. Planes present a pantheon of recurring ‘types’ – consultants with NGO contracts, officials bearing governmental aid, missionary families, Peace Corps volunteers, journalists, researchers, and tourists. Flights between East Africa and Dubai, by contrast, host a representative ‘type’ rarely seen shuttling to

⁸ <http://www.vanityfair.com/magazine/vintage/oneclickhistory>

⁹ The singular African contribution to the issue is an upbeat assessment of Nairobi by Kenyan writer Binyavanga Wainaina - “Generation Kenya” - in which he breezes through *mitumba*, freemarks/exhibitions, Dubai clothes, and Somali investment in Eastleigh, all with great enthusiasm (*Vanity Fair* July 2007:84).

and from the North - businessmen (and they are, most always, *businessmen*) - from South, East, and Southwest Asia. The stark differences in perceptions of Africa as a bastion of aid versus investment and trade map perhaps too well onto imaginaries of Africa in the North and, by contrast, the South (and, particularly, Asia). Interviewees, however, noted this difference in perception (and corresponding difference in engagement). As voiced by D. Rono of the Kenyan Ministry of Trade, in this defiant assessment,

Our problems are Western problems. Liberalization of trade...of the economy...is responsible for the collapse of our textile industries. We entered liberalization without any planning...With China, we don't have these problems we have with the U.S., with the West. When we get aid from the U.S., we're made to feel like beggars and thieves. There are strings attached. We must shape ourselves in their image. It's colonialism again [but] we're through with this colonial mentality. Enough! China sees possibilities here, not misery. The Chinese see there is a problem with our cotton industry, so they are providing training and technology to improve our synthetic fibers. I was there myself [in China] from December to January [2006] to train on textiles. China consumes a lot of Kenya: cement, scrap metals, but without these strings of the U.S. and E.U...This is our direction now. (Rono, personal interview, 25 April 2006, Nairobi)

This willingness to turn to Asia (whether China directly or Dubai by proxy), as an antidote to the “colonial mentality” characterizing relations with the West is an important and problematic phenomenon of “Looking East.” Just as there are champions of deepening Sino-Kenyan relations, there are numerous detractors, cautioning Kenyans from selling themselves and their resources to a “ravenous” China (Mbitiru 2006:16, Mwathane 2006:15, Sorbara 2006:12-13). As a focus on textiles and apparel suggests, the geographies of global integration are complicated, contradictory, and persistently colonial. The substitution of one extractive regime for another must be carefully considered.

Contributions

Africans in myriad social and geographical locations increasingly seek to claim membership within global communities in ways that contest the marginalization that has so far been the principal yield of “globalization” for Africa (Ferguson 2006). As presented by Ferguson, such claims demand new understandings of the global, centered less on transnational flows and images of unfettered connection than on the social relations that selectively constitute global society and on the rights and obligations that characterize it (ibid.).

I began this dissertation by seeking to ameliorate the overwhelming absence of Africa in the globalization literature with a study of textiles and apparel and a focus on the South-South networks within which Kenya is embedded. This analysis required attention to clothed, working, traveling bodies (both women and men), cities (Nairobi, Mombasa, Muscat, Dubai), regions (South-South and specifically both the regional ties within East Africa and the relationships amid Africa and Asia), and the globe (in terms of “Global” Value Chains and the globalization discourses and imaginaries from and within which Africa is located and understood). Throughout this research, the role of Kenyans as subjects rather than objects of globalization was increasingly apparent.

Through interviews with shoppers, sellers, manufacturers, shippers, and administrators, in discussions of existing literatures, and in assessments of available trade data, persistent themes emerged:

- The pervasiveness of historical imaginaries of (East) Africa’s long regional and global engagements, in terms of personal and familial links, expressions of

identity (including those associated with Islam and with appearances), and political and economic networks

- The emergence of “new regionalisms”, whereby Asia, particularly, is increasingly positively recast in the imaginaries and materialities of everyday life with respect to clothing, travel, religion, language, economics and politics
- The growth in and increasing “internationalization” of the informal sector in Kenya, represented by the surging trade in *mitumba* and the corresponding vibrancy associated with “Dubai clothes” – from the establishment of new patterns of small-scale entrepreneurship, to dramatic alterations in the built environment with the establishment of shopping malls and “exhibitions”
- Africa, Kenya, and Kenyans as inextricably and often inequitably linked in the broader processes and projects of discontinuous and fractured geographies of globalization

Building on work within new economic geographies emphasizing cultures and economies as mutually constitutive (Amin and Thrift 2004, Gibson and Kong 2005, Amin with Thrift 2007), in this dissertation I sought to address textiles and clothing beyond the confines of export processing (and the framework associated with global commodity and value chains). I aimed, instead, to present the myriad ways in which global economic and cultural processes integrate with international policies, state strategies, and individual and group tactics animating everyday life in Kenya. Attentive to intersections of identities, economic practices, and transnational networks, historically situated, this approach served to highlight the compelling geographies mutually

constituting international garments systems in Kenya, though overwhelmingly elided from a normative focus on “global” apparel.

This study identifies cloth and clothing, through the international systems of African print cloth, secondhand garments, export-oriented apparel, and “Dubai clothes,” as sites of transforming regional integration, reconfiguring development strategies, and as sources of multiple imaginaries of globalization in Kenya. Beginning with an interrogation of African cloth, export apparel, and secondhand garments, I highlighted the complicated and at times contradictory articulations animating each with respect to colonial and postcolonial Kenyan histories, successive development policies, and the spatialities associated with each. In particular, I argued that the systems, which appear disassociated when viewed through the lens of commodity chain and global value chain analyses, are mutually constitutive. Therefore a GVC approach, while useful in systematizing “backward” and “forward” linkages within a given apparel chain, is inadequate. Needed instead is an analytical framework encompassing intersections and articulations with the requisite explanatory power to convey the work of each system in Kenyan development.

Attentive to the intersecting scales through which clothing is experienced – from the corporeal to state-based policies to international networks and regimes of trade – I continued with a tandem focus on clothed bodies and the creation of consumer subjectivities. This lens highlighted the ways in which the international clothing systems in Kenya come together in everyday life and how, in this process, the cultural and economic are intertwined. Specifically, I addressed debates as to the impacts of contemporary consumption on both global geographies (of cultural “sameness” and

difference) and local geographies (of public space and life) through a discussion of shopping spaces and identity performances involving clothing.

In connecting local contexts of everyday consumption with the global networks of commodity flows and production that make them possible, I turned to an ethnographic approach to transnational trade via the emergent availability of “Dubai clothes” in Kenya. The trade in “exhibition” clothes continues to emerge through a constellation of events within which Kenya is firmly situated – from neoliberalism, to neighboring conflicts in Somalia and the impact of subsequent refugees, to the creation of informal networks of transnational capital, to the embeddedness of the East African Muslim community, particularly the Swahili, in wider geopolitical and economic transformations, to the reinvention of Dubai (and displacement of Zanzibar) as *the* link between Africa and Asia. Taken together, these re-orientations are indicative of the ways in which Kenyans, seeking global and regional economic and cultural integrations, are reimagining and rematerializing longstanding ties with Asia predicated on shared histories and actualized, through fashion and trade. In the process of “Looking East” to new possibilities and ever-present pitfalls, Kenyans and the Kenyan government, are revising the normative script of Western hegemonic globalization (Fig. 36).

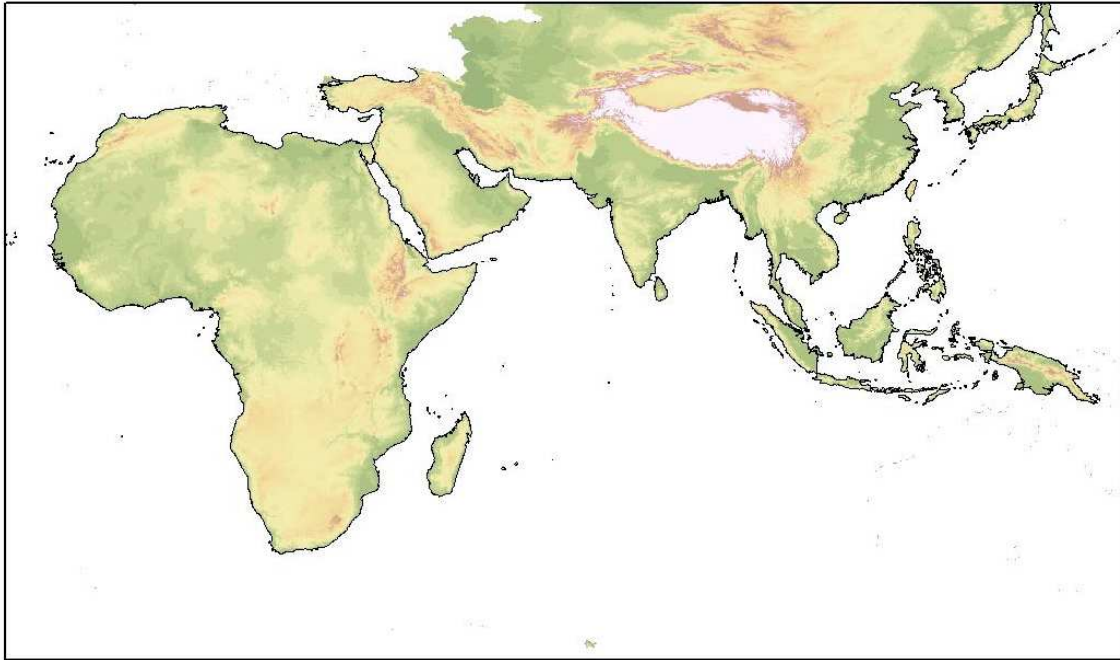


Fig. 36. Africa-Asia, re-centered

Methodological Notes

In concluding his explication of the California landscape, and the erasure of class and ethnicity in its creation, Don Mitchell offers the following critique of episodic studies: “Not looking back and seeking to provide an overarching explanation would put me in good stead with those scholars who have become increasingly suspicious of what Michael Curry has called the “architectonic impulse,” the desire to create and explain overarching systems of social activity. The goal for these scholars is instead to focus on the local, the contingent, the partial. The goal is precisely *not* to ‘sum up.’” (1996:198, emphasis in original). Mitchell utilizes this setup to critique what he perceives as the ineffectuality of contingent presentation, arguing instead for the political necessity of a final summation. Despite this withering view, I would suggest that Mitchell misses “a” point (not “the” point, of course, as there are more than one).

The approaches evidenced in this project *are* episodic, contingent, and processual rather than programmatic, reflecting a rejection, on my part, of this “architectonic impulse” in geography and other disciplines of “science.” This tactic does not, I would argue, diminish its analytical utility or the potential contributions of its understandings. In part, methodological issues surrounding data collection in the “global South” necessitated this approach.

Gibbon and Ponte begin their own discussion of value chains in Africa with a methodological cautionary note, pertinent to South-South research:

Discussion of Africa’s international trade has to begin with caveats concerning data. Two difficulties present themselves at the outset. The first is the quality and regularity of reporting trade data by African countries themselves. Quality is very poor, even in countries like South Africa. Moreover, reporting is often years out of date.”

Despite their reliance on the reporting of “Africa’s trading partners,” this “nevertheless leaves some trade unreported, particularly that between African countries themselves. (Gibbon and Ponte 2005:36).

Anticipating challenges, therefore, in the availability of South-South trade data, I sought to present a more compelling (and more detailed and representative) narrative, by joining ethnographic methods of participant observation, extended research, and local embeddedness, with key informant interviews, news and popular media, and presentations of available statistical information. While each of these sources is susceptible to erroneous presentations¹⁰, it is hoped that in combination they generate a view that reflects, in part, the experiences of contemporary Kenyans.

¹⁰ One example of the problematic statistical reporting referred to here by Gibbon and Ponte (2005) emerged in a reading of the 2006 Economic Survey of Kenya. Mwai Kibaki pledged to create a half million jobs per annum since assuming power in the December 2002 elections. His National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government claims to have achieved this formidable goal each year beginning in 2003 – an impressive feat. The Economic Survey indicates that 458,900 new jobs were created in 2005 – thus

Data caveats aside, it was nevertheless an imperative of this work to highlight transformations in South-South geographies in keeping with the overall postcolonial commitments framing this research. As Gökariksel explains in the context of her comparative study of modernity in Turkey and Indonesia:

Rather than embarking on a project that would study a “western” context to compare with Istanbul, choosing a “non-western” city decentralizes the West from the studies of modernity. Any consideration of comparative modernities outside of the West shows that taking the West as a reference point is not required for the study of modernity and that it is interesting and sufficient to analyze modernity comparatively in non-Western contexts. (Gökariksel 2003:38).

In this way, and in the context of globalization narratives, I aimed to resituate clothing research from a pervasive focus on the export apparel sector (and the western-orientation this emphasis implies), to include multiple and intersecting international systems operating in and through Kenya. As I considered these systems in the context of this research, I returned to the same persistent question: what are the implications of these policies for the wellbeing of Kenyans?

Can the “cultural turn” in new economic geographies contribute to understandings of material wellbeing, development, poverty alleviation, and persistent global inequalities in meaningful ways? In discussing Kenyan models of industrial development, I showed that the planning and execution (and later collapse) of import substitution industrialization (ISI), particularly as it embraced cloth and clothing, cannot be understood in the absence of attention to associated cultural particularities. Cloth and

supporting this claim (2006:64). Reading further, however, the government notes that 44,500 of these jobs were in the “modern sector” (i.e., formal sector), while 414,000 jobs were, by contrast, “created” in the informal or *jua kali* sector (2006:74). Read another way, 9 out of 10 jobs the Kenyan government is claiming credit for having created is in the informal sector (ibid.) As there are no available statistics of “informal sector” job creation, this number is at best, an estimate. While likely “inaccurate” with respect to actual numbers, what this statistic does reveal - the enormous disparity in formal and informal sectors, the expansive growth of *jua kali*, which includes the *mitumba* trade, and the ability of Kenyans to “make-do” in the face of grave economic hardships - is nevertheless relevant, vital, and “factual” information.

clothing manufacture in ISI reflected, in part, entrenched views of the popularity and meaningfulness of “African cloth” and its post-independence importance as a tangible symbol of African identity. Attention to particularities and contingencies whenever fashion is involved is, however, vital.

While *khanga* and *kitenge* were a major component of this industrialization effort, their consumption, as evidenced by colonial trade data and key informant interviews, waned prior to independence. In Kenya, unlike Tanzania, *leso* appeal was similarly circumscribed – worn by coastal women, particularly those identifying as Swahili, but without the widespread base that could propel extensive sales. Thus the domestic “African” market relied on to purchase the output of local African print textile manufacture was itself more fragmented and therefore smaller and ultimately less sustaining than initially conceived in ISI.

“Traditional” dress is always a changing practice, remaking itself in interaction with other clothing styles, with garments of Western commercial design and consumption, and with respect to “global” fashion systems, including those corresponding to aspects of identity (such as Islam). The regional and transnational integration of Kenyans in the Middle East and, increasingly, East Asia, contributes to realizations of these new ‘worlds in dress,’ breaking down conventional fashion boundaries. Understanding fashion as a global phenomenon is further supported by shifts in the organization of garment production across the globe, as well as by the vast economic significance of garment production in world trade (Hansen 2002:372).

The production of markets, including “the domestic market” is itself a hugely mystified ideological project that seeks to erase the very facts of its (quite social)

production (paraphrasing Mitchell, on landscapes, who in turn references Neil Smith, on the “production” of nature (in Mitchell 1996:6). Consumer cultures in Kenya and the understandings and assumptions underlying notions of “purchasing power” have been increasingly marginalized and/or ignored by state policies privileging Western consumers. One result is a population awash in *mitumba*. But the story of secondhand, as Hansen suggests in Zambia (2000), is not necessarily a solitary narrative of abjection, neoliberalization, “underdevelopment,” or garment production collapse. Rather, *mitumba* is narrated in Kenya through a complex web of associations, including uniqueness, affordability, style, and a powerful imperative to claim a good bargain.

Tastes, of course, likewise change. As the Swahili community reimagines and rematerializes its identification with global Islamic practices corporealized in the growing adoption of U.A.E. style *buibui* for women and the renewed popularity of *kanzu* for men, as the majority of Kenyans remake *mitumba* into styles prized for their uniqueness and affordability, and as more Kenyans frequent the new Somali shopping malls for the latest in “Dubai” fashion, these complex alterations of political, spiritual, economic, and sartorial identities portend dramatic local effects. These articulations must be conceptualized, I argue, together with any plans to revitalize local apparel industries, strengthen exchange ties, and enlarge overseas networks of production and exchange.

Throughout this study, I have been guided by a commitment to postcolonial research. In this way, I have sought to reposition Kenya (and by extension, Africa) at the center of globalization debates. I have focused on the cultural and economic imperialisms reflected in the current “export” commodity fetish sweeping sub-Saharan Africa, whereby substantial investment and public expenditure is channeled into export garment

production, while the domestic market is relegated to “secondhand” status. And where an enclaved spatiality of globalization threatens to shift the site of development from the level of the state, with a commitment, however unrealized, for widespread improvements in living conditions, to a fractured and discontinuous “global” of exacerbated disparities.

Postcolonial approaches, including those animating new economic geographies, have been derided for their perceived inattentiveness to materiality in favor of textuality (see McEwan 2003). I nevertheless believe in the salience of these approaches, provided they are pursued with attention to material concerns of poverty, inequality, and powerlessness that research in the global South must necessarily confront. In this study, globalization is presented as mediated by historical forces and local and transnational communities linked by understandings of identities. This coming together of cultures of economies seeks to confront the potent challenges in Africa without taking them as insurmountable, paralyzing, exceptional, or necessarily representative of what it means to be Kenyan.

Appendix 1:

Kenya garment exports to U.S. by category, as SME and USD (million), 2005 and 2006¹

Category	Product	2005 SME (million)	2006 SME (million)	2005 USD (million)	2006 USD (million)
Aggregations					
0	Total	74.079	65.790	271.021	263.721
1	Apparel	73.899	65.461	270.557	262.905
2	Non-Apparel	0.180	0.329	0.464	0.816
12	Fabrics	0.045	0.297	0.050	0.689
14	Made Ups/Misc	0.135	0.031	0.415	0.127
30	Cotton Products	56.743	49.603	226.737	222.674
31	Cotton Apparel	56.711	49.579	226.645	222.599
32	Cot Non-App	0.032	0.024	0.092	0.075
40	Wool Products	0.001	0.007	0.047	0.040
41	Wool Apparel	0.001	0.007	0.008	0.022
42	Wool Non-App	0.001	0.001	0.039	0.018
60	MMF Products	17.308	16.072	44.108	40.683
61	MMF Apparel	17.164	15.778	43.799	40.021
62	MMF Non-Apparel	0.144	0.294	0.308	0.662
80	S and V Product	0.026	0.108	0.130	0.325
81	S and V Apparel	0.023	0.098	0.105	0.263
82	S and V non-App	0.004	0.010	0.025	0.061
Cotton or					

¹ Source: OTEXA

MMF					
239	Baby Garm/Acc	2.838	1.737	5.862	4.342
Cotton					
334	Other Coats, MB	0.610	0.000	1.499	0.000
335	W/G Cot. Coats	1.687	0.816	2.900	1.442
338	Knit Shirts, MB	1.140	0.729	8.311	4.706
339	W/G Knit Blouse	3.098	5.244	13.398	24.638
340	N-Knt Shirts, MB	1.026	0.545	2.879	1.850
342	Cotton skirts	0.497	0.479	1.952	2.004
347	Cot. M/B Trouser	8.389	11.094	36.485	51.163
348	W/G slacks, etc	35.952	28.356	150.710	131.133
351	Cot. Nghtwr/PJs	0.867	0.143	1.129	0.077
MMF					
634	Other Coats, MB	0.363	0.969	0.613	1.418
635	Coats, W/G	1.427	1.302	2.206	2.026
638	Knit Shirts, MB	2.947	1.673	5.695	4.114
639	Knit blouses, WG	2.611	3.291	7.331	8.831
640	N-K shirts, MB	0.770	1.252	1.940	3.215
641	N-K blouses, WG	0.133	0.801	0.471	1.793
644	MMF W/G suits	0.022	0.031	0.038	0.039
647	Trousers, etc. MB	5.436	3.959	16.065	12.418
648	Slacks, etc. WG	2.486	1.548	7.648	4.184

REFERENCES

- Abernathy F., J. Dunlop, J. Hammond, and D. Weil. 1999. *A Stitch in Time: Lean Retailing and the Transformation of Manufacturing—Lessons from the Apparel and Textile Industries*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Abernathy F. H., A. Volpe, and D. Weil. 2006. "The future of the apparel and textile industries: prospects and choices for public and private actors." *Environment and Planning A* 38: 2207-2232.
- Adedjei, A. (Ed.) 1993. *Africa Within the World: Beyond Dispossession and Dependence*. London: Zed Books.
- Adorno, T., and M. Horkheimer. 1993. "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," in *The Cultural Studies Reader*. Edited by S. During, pp. 29-43. London: Routledge.
- Afshar, H., and S. Barrientos. (Eds.). 1999. *Women, Globalization and Fragmentation in the Developing World*. London: Macmillan.
- AGOA. 2004. "Apparel Trade Under AGOA"
http://www.agoa.info/index.php?view=trade_stats&story=apparel_trade&valuation=sme
- Allen, J. d. V. 1993. *Swahili Origins: Swahili Culture and the Shungwaya Phenomenon*. London: James Currey.
- Ali, A. 2004. "Clothes worth Sh 960m from China Set Ablaze." *The Nation* [Kenya]. 17 July 2004.
- Alpers, E. 1983. "Futa Benaadir: Continuity and change in the traditional cotton textiles industry of southern Somalia 1840-1980," in *Entreprises et entrepreneurs en Afrique XIXe et XXe siècles* I:77-98. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Amin, A. 1997. "Placing globalization." *Theory, Culture and Society* 14 (2): 123-37.
- Amin, A. 2002. "Spatialities of globalization." *Environment and Planning A* 34 (3): 385-99.
- Amin, A. 2004. "Regulating Economic Globalization." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 29: 217-233.
- Amin, A. and N. Thrift (Eds.). 2004. *Cultural economy: a reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Amin, A. with N. Thrift. 2007. "Cultural-economy and cities." *Progress in Human Geography* 31 (2): 143-161.
- Amin, S. [1976] 1994. "The Origin and Development of Underdevelopment" in *Unequal Development*. New York: Monthly Review Press. Reprinted in R. Kanth, ed., *Paradigms in Economic Development. Classic Perspectives, Critiques, and Reflections*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Appadurai, A. (Ed.) 1986. *The Social Life of Things*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Appadurai, A. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

- Appelbaum, R. and G. Gereffi. 1994. "Power and Profits in the apparel commodity chain," in *Global Production: The Apparel Industry in the Pacific Rim*. Edited by E. Bonacich, L. Cheng, N. Chinchilla, N. Hamilton and P. Ong. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Arrighi, G. and J. Drangel. 1986. "The Stratification of the World-Economy." *Review* 10 (1): 9-74.
- Arrighi, G. 1990. "The Developmentalist Illusion: A Reconceptualization of the Semiperiphery," in *Semiperipheral States in the World-Economy*. Edited by W. Martin. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Arrighi, G. 2002. "The African Crisis." *New Left Review* 15, May-June: 5-36.
<http://newleftreview.org/?view=2387>.
- Ashcroft, B., G. Griffiths, and H. Tiffin. 1989. *The Empire Writes Back*. London: Routledge.
- Askew, K. 2002. *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Baden, S. and C. Barber 2005. "The impact of the second-hand clothing trade on developing countries." Oxfam. http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/policy/trade/downloads/research_shc.pdf
- Bahadur, A. 2004. *Taking the Devil's Rope: AGOA and Sweatshops in the Apparel Sector*. Civil Society Research and Support Collective.
- Bair, J. 2005. "Global Capitalism and Commodity Chains: Looking Back, Going Forward." *Competition and Change* 9 (2): 129-156.
- Bair, J. 2006. "Regional trade and production blocs in a global industry: towards a comparative framework for research." *Environment and Planning A* 38: 2233-2252.
- Bair, J. and G. Gereffi. 2001. "Local clusters in global chains: the causes and consequences of export dynamism in Torreon's blue jeans industry." *World Development* 29:1885-1903.
- Bair, J. and G. Gereffi. 2002. NAFTA and the apparel commodity chain: corporate strategies, inter-firm networks, and local development," in *Free Trade and Uneven Development: The North American Apparel Industry after NAFTA*. Edited by G. Gereffi, D. Spener, and J. Bair. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Bair, J. and G. Gereffi. 2003. "Upgrading, Uneven Development, and Jobs in the North American Apparel Industry." *Global Networks* 3 (2): 143-169.
- Bair, J. and H. Ramsay. 2001. "Global Production Networks: A Commodity Chain Analysis and its Implications for Labor," in *Multinational Companies and Transnational Workplace Issues*. Edited by W. Cooke. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Baran, P. [1957] 1994. "On the Roots of Backwardness" in *The Political Economy of Growth*. New York: Monthly Review Press. Reprinted in R. Kanth, ed., *Paradigms in Economic Development. Classic Perspectives, Critiques, and Reflections*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

- Barnes, T. 2001. "Retheorizing economic geography: from the quantitative revolution to the 'cultural turn.'" *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 91:546-565.
- Barnes, T. 2003. "Never mind the economy. Here's culture," in *The Handbook of cultural geography*, pp. 89-97. Edited by K. Anderson, M. Domosh, S. Pile, and N. Thrift. London: Sage.
- Barnes, R. and J. Eicher (Eds.). 1992. *Dress and Gender: Making and Meaning in Cultural Contexts*. Berg.
- Bayart, J.-F. 2000. "Africa in the World: A History of Extroversion." *African Affairs* 99: 217-267.
- BBC. 2004. "Kenya Unveils First National Dress." 16 September 2004. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/africa/3660698.stm>
- Beck, R. M. 2000. "Aesthetics of Communication: Texts on Textiles (Leso) From the East African Coast. *Research in African Literatures* 31 (4): 104-124.
- Begg, R. and J. Pickles. 2000. "Ethnicity, state violence, and neo-liberal transitions in post-communist Bulgaria." *Growth and Change* 31: 179-210.
- Bell, D. and G. Valentine. 1997. *Consuming Geographies*. New York: Routledge.
- Benjamin, W. 1999. *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Berman, B. 1999. *Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya: The Dialectic of Domination*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.
- Bhabha, H. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Bienen, H. 1990. "The Politics of Trade Liberalization in Africa." *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 38: 713-732.
- Bigsten, A. and D. Durevall. 2003. "Globalisation and Policy Effects in Africa." *The World Economy* 26 (8): 1119-1136.
- Bin Dakhan, M. 2007. Statistics Center of Dubai. Personal communication.
- Bloemen, S. 2002. *T-Shirt Travels: A Documentary on Secondhand Clothes and Third World Debt in Zambia*. 55 minutes. Independent Television Service.
- Bloom, D. and J. Sachs. 1998. "Geography, Demography, and Economic Growth in Africa," *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity* 2: 207-273.
- Blunt, A. 1994. *Travel, Gender, and Imperialism: Mary Kingsley and West Africa*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Blunt, A. and C. McEwan (Eds.). 2002. *Postcolonial Geographies*. London: Continuum Press.
- Bickford, K. E. 1994. "The ABC's of Cloth and Politics in Côte d'Ivoire." *Africa Today* 41 (2) 5-24.

- Bonacich, E. and R. Appelbaum. 2000. *Behind the Label*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Bordo, S. 1993. *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bourdieu, P. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brenner, S. 1996. "Reconstructing self and society: Javanese Muslim women and "the veil," *American Ethnologist* 23: 673-697.
- Brenner, N. and N. Theodore. 2002. *Spaces of Neoliberalism. Urban restructuring in North America and Western Europe*. London: Blackwell.
- Broadman, H. 2007. *Africa's Silk Road. China and India's New Economic Frontier*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Buck-Morss, S. 1993. *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*. Cambridge, MA, The M.I.T. Press.
- Burawoy, M. 1991. "The extended case method," in *Ethnography unbound: Power and resistance in the modern metropolis*. Edited by M. Burawoy, J. Gamson, and A. Burton. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Burke, T. 1996. *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women: Commodification, Consumption, and Cleanliness in Modern Zimbabwe*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Calderia, T. 1996. "Fortified Enclaves: The New Urban Segregation." *Public Culture* 8 (2): 303-328.
- Campbell, E. 2005. "Formalizing the informal economy: Somali refugee and migrant trade networks in Nairobi." *Global Migration Perspectives No. 47*. September 2005. Geneva: Global Commission on International Migration.
- Campbell, E. 2006. "Urban Refugees in Nairobi: Problems of Protection, Mechanisms of Survival, Possibilities for Integration." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 19 (3): 396-413.
- Castells, M. 1996. *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Castells, M. 1999. *The Rise of the Network Society*, 2nd edition. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Chakrabarty, D. 2000. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Chittick, N. 1974. *Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast*, Vol. 1. Nairobi: British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Chaudhuri, K.N. 1985. *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Clifford, J. 1992. "Traveling Cultures," in *Cultural Studies*, pp. 96-112. Edited by L. Grossberg, C. Nelson and P. Treichler. New York: Routledge.

Clifford, J. and G. F. Marcus. (Eds.). 1986. *Writing culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Comaroff, J. L., and Comaroff J. 1997. "Fashioning the Colonial Subject: The Empire's Old Clothes," in *Of Revelation and Revolution*, vol. 2, *The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*. Edited by J. L. Comaroff and J. Comaroff, pp. 218-273. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cook, I. and Crang, P. 1996. "The world on a plate: culinary culture, displacement and geographical knowledges. *Journal of Material Culture* 1 (2): 131-153.

Cooke, M. and B. Lawrence. 2005. *Muslim Networks. From Hajj to Hip Hop*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

Cooper, F. 1980. *From Slaves to Squatters: Plantation Labor and Agriculture in Zanzibar and Coastal Kenya, 1890-1925*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Corbridge, S. 1993. "Colonialism, Post-colonialism, and the Political Geography of the Third World" in *Political Geography of the Twentieth Century. A Global Analysis*. Edited by P. Taylor. London: Belhaven.

Cornell, V. J. 2005. "Ibn Battuta's Opportunism: The Networks and Loyalties of a Medieval Muslim Scholar," in *Muslim Networks. From Hajj to Hip Hop*, pp. 31-50. Edited by M. Cooke and B. Lawrence. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

Coughlin, P. and G. K. Ikiara (Eds.) 1988. *Industrialization in Kenya*. Nairobi: Heinemann.

Crang, P. 1997. "Cultural Turns and the (Re)constitution of Economic Geography: Introduction to Section One," in *Geographies of Economies*, pp. 3-15. Edited by R. Lee and J. Wills. London: Arnold.

Crang, P. C. Dwyer, and P. Jackson. 2003. "Transnationalism and the spaces of commodity culture." *Progress in Human Geography* 27 (4): 438-456.

Crang, P. and P. Jackson. 2001. "Consuming geographies," in *British cultural studies*. Edited by D. Morley and K. Robins eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cravey, A. 2005. "Desire, work and transnational identity." *Ethnography* 6 (3): 357-383.

Crewe, L. and E. Davenport. 1992. "The puppet show: changing buyer-supplier relationships within clothing retailing." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 21: 22-27.

Crewe, L. and Z. Forster. 1993. "Markets, designs, and local agglomeration: the role of the small independent retailer in the workings of the fashion system." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 11: 213-229.

- Cruise O'Brien, D. 1995. "Coping with the Christians. The Muslim Predicament in Kenya," in *Religion and Politics in East Africa*. Edited by H. Hansen and M. Twaddle. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.
- Curry, M. 1992. "The Architectonic Impulse and the Reconceptualization of the Concrete in Contemporary Geography," in *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape*. Edited by T. Barnes and J. Duncan, pp. 97-117. London: Routledge.
- de Certeau, M. 1984. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Deleuze, G. and F. Guattari 1986. *Kafka. Toward a Minor Literature*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Derrida, J. 1998. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- de Valk, P. 1996. *African Industry in Decline. The Case of Textiles in Tanzania in the 1980s*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Dewalt, K. M. and B. R. Dewalt. 2002. *Participant observation: A guide for fieldworkers*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Dicken, P. 2003. *Global Shift: Reshaping the Global Economic Map of the 21st Century, Fourth Edition*. New York: Guilford.
- Dicken, P. 2004. "Geographers and 'globalization': (yet) another missed boat?" *Transactions IBG* 29:5-26.
- Dicken, P., P. Kelly, K. Olds, and H. Wai-Chung Yeung. 2001. "Chains and networks, territories and scales: towards a relational framework for analysing the global economy." *Global Networks*, 1 (2): 89-112.
- Diouf, M. 2000. "The Senegalese Murid Trade Diaspora and the Making of a Vernacular Cosmopolitanism." *Public Culture* 12 (3): 679-702.
- Dirlik, A. 1994. "The postcolonial aura: Third World criticism in the age of global capitalism." *Critical Inquiry* 20 (2): 329-356.
- Dolan, C. and M. Tewari 2001. "From What we Wear to What we Eat: Upgrading in Global Value Chains." *IDS Bulletin* 32 (3): 94-104.
- Domosh, M. 2003. "Pickles and purity: discourses of food, empire and work in turn-of-the-century USA." *Social and Cultural Geography* 4 (1): 7-26.
- Dougherty, C. 2004. "Trade Theory vs. Used Clothes in Africa." *New York Times*. 3 June 2004. <http://select.nytimes.com/search/restricted/article?res=F40B11FE3E550C708CDDAF0894DC404482>
- Douglas, M. 1970. *Natural Symbols*. London: Routledge.
- Dubai 2005 Department of Economic Development (DED). Competitiveness Trends-Overall. www.dubaided.gov.ae

- Dubai 2006 Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing. www.dubaitourism.co.ae
- du Gay, P. and M. Pryke (Eds.). 2002. *Cultural economy*. London: Sage.
- Dunn, R. 1986. *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the Fourteenth Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Dwyer, C. 1997. "Contested Identities : Challenging Dominant Representations of young British Muslim Women," in *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures*, pp. 50-65. Edited by T. Skelton and G. Valentine. London: Routledge.
- Dwyer, C. 1999. "Contradictions of community: questions of identity for young British Muslim women." *Environment and Planning A* 31: 53-68.
- Dwyer, C. 2004. "Tracing transnationalities through commodity culture: a case study of British-South Asian fashion," in *Transnational Spaces*. Edited by P. Jackson, P. Crang, and C. Dwyer. London: Routledge.
- Dwyer, C. and P. Crang. 2002. "Fashioning ethnicities: The commercial spaces of multiculturalism." *Ethnicities* 2 (3): 410-430.
- Dwyer, C. and P. Jackson. 2003. "Commodifying difference: selling EASTern fashion." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 21: 269-291.
- East African Legislative Assembly. 9 March 2005.
<http://eac.int/eala/documents/hd2005/9Mar2005.pdf>
- East African Standard*. 2003. "Indian Investors Eyeing Kenyan Textile Plant," 30 October.
- Eastman, C. 1971. "Who are the Waswahili?" *Africa* 41 (3): 228-236.
- Eicher, J. (Ed.). 1995. *Dress and Ethnicity: change across space and time*. Oxford: Berg.
- Eicher, J. and M. E. Roach-Higgins. 1992. "Describing and Classifying Dress: Implications for the study of Gender," in *Dress and Gender: Making and Meaning in Cultural Context*. Edited by R. Barnes and J. Eicher. Oxford: Berg.
- El Guindi, F. 1999. *Veil: modesty, privacy and resistance*. Oxford: Berg.
- Englund, H., and J. Leach 2000. "Ethnography and the Meta-Narratives of Modernity." *Current Anthropology* 41(2): 225.
- Entwistle, J. 2000. *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Esbenshade, J. 2004. *Monitoring Sweatshops: Workers, Consumers, and the Global Apparel Industry*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Escobar, A. 1995. *Encountering Development. The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Export Processing Zones Authority. 2005. *Kenya's Apparel and Textile Industry 2005*
<http://www.epzakenya.com/news.php?type=press&itemno=45>
- Fahnbulleh, M. 2006. "In search of economic development in Kenya: colonial legacies & post-independence realities." *Review of African Political Economy* 33(107):33-47.
- Fair L. 2001. *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890-1945*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.
- Fair, L. 2004. "Remaking Fashion in the Paris of the Indian Ocean: Dress, Performance, and the Cultural Construction of a Cosmopolitan Zanzibari Identity," in *Fashioning Africa: Power and the Politics of Dress*, pp. 13-30. Edited by Jean Allman. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Featherstone, M. 1990. "Perspectives on Consumer Culture." *Sociology* 24 (1): 5-22.
- Featherstone, M. 1991. *Consumer culture and Postmodernism*. London: Sage.
- Ferguson, J. 1999. *Expectations of Modernity. Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ferguson, J. 2001. "Global Disconnect: Abjection and the Aftermath of Modernization," in *The Anthropology of Globalization: A Reader*. Edited by J. Inda and R. Rosaldo. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Ferguson, J. 2006. *Global Shadows. Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Ferguson, J. and A. Gupta. 2002. Spatializing States: Governmentality in Africa and India." *American Ethnologist* 29 (4): 981-1002.
- Field, S. 2005. "The beneficial nature of the second-hand clothing trade in Sub-Saharan Africa." Paper presented at "European Conference – Textile Recycling: How can we save a sector in crisis?" Brussels, Belgium, 13 October 2005. www.lmb.co.uk/downloads/TextilesInAfrica.pdf
- Flint H. 2004. "AGOA Update: Why AGOA III is vital for Africa?" Standard Bank African Research, Economics Division.
<http://www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0000808/index.php>
- Foucault, M. [1975] 1977. *Discipline and Punish*. New York: Pantheon.
- Frank, A. [1966] 1994. "The Development of Underdevelopment" in *The Monthly Review* 18(4):17-31. Reprinted in R. Kanth, ed., *Paradigms in Economic Development. Classic Perspectives, Critiques, and Reflections*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Freeman, C. 2001. "Is Local:Global as Feminine:Masculine? Rethinking the Gender of Globalization." *Signs* 26 (4): 1007-1038.
- Friedman, T. 2000. *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization*. New York: Anchor Books.

- Friedman, T. 2005. *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
- Fuglesang, M. 1992. "No Longer Ghosts: Women's notions of 'development' and 'modernity' in Lamu Town, Kenya." *Kam-ap or Take-off: Local notions of development*. Stockholm: Stockholm University, Department of Social Anthropology.
- Gaonkar, D. P., (Ed.) 1999. *Alter/native Modernities*. Volume I: Millennial Quartet. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Gereffi, G. 1994. "The organization of buyer-driven global commodity chains: how US retailers shape overseas production networks," in *Commodity Chains and Global Capitalism*, pp. 95-122. Edited by G. Gereffi and M. Korzeniewicz. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Gereffi, G. 1995. "Global production systems and third world development," in *Global Change, Regional Response: the new international context of development*. Edited by B. Stallings. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Gereffi, G. 1999. "International trade and industrial upgrading in the apparel commodity chain." *Journal of International Economics* 48 (1): 37-70.
- Gereffi, G. 2005. "The Global Economy: Organization, Governance and Development," in *Handbook of Economic Sociology*, 2nd edition, pp. 160-182. Edited by N. Smelser and R. Swedberg. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Gereffi, G., J. Humphrey, R. Kaplinsky and T. Sturgeon. 2001. "Introduction: Globalisation, Value Chains, and Development." *IDS Bulletin* 32 (3): 1-8.
- Gereffi, G. J. Humphrey and T. Sturgeon. 2005. "The governance of global value chains." *Review of International Political Economy* 12 (1): 78-104.
- Gereffi, G. and M. Korzeniewicz. (Eds.). 1994. *Commodity Chains and Global Capitalism*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Gibbon P. 2000a. "Global commodity chains and economic upgrading in less developed countries." CDR Working Paper Subseries no. viii. 00.2
- Gibbon P. 2000b. "'Back to the Basics' through Delocalisation: The Mauritian Garment Industry at the End of the Twentieth Century." CDR Working Paper 00.7. October 2000 Working Paper Subseries on Globalisation and Economic Restructuring in Africa no. x.
- Gibbon P. 2002. "South Africa and the Global Commodity Chain for Clothing: Export Performance and Constraints." CDR Working Paper 02.7, April 2002. Working Paper Subseries on Globalisation and Economic Restructuring in Africa no. xix.
- Gibbon P. 2003. "The African Growth and Opportunity Act and the Global Commodity Chain for Clothing." *World Development* 31 (11): 1809-1827.
- Gibbon, P. and S. Ponte. 2005. *Trading Down. Africa, Value Chains, and the Global Economy*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. 1996. *The End of Capitalism (as We Knew It): A Feminist*

Critique of Political Economy. Oxford: Blackwell.

Gibson, C. and L. Kong. 2005. Cultural economy: a critical review. *Progress in Human Geography* 29 (5): 542-561.

Glick Schiller, N., L. Bausch, and C. Blanc-Szanton (Eds.). 1992. *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity, and Nationalism Reconsidered*. New York: The New York Academy of Sciences.

Glick Schiller, N. 1997. "The situation of transnational studies." *Identities* 4: 155-166.

Gökariksel, B. 2003. *Globalization and Alternative Modernities: Forging Identities in Urban Space*. Unpublished dissertation.

Gökariksel, B. and K. Mitchell. 2005. Veiling, Secularism, and the Neoliberal Subject: National Narratives and Supranational Desires in Turkey and France. *Global Networks* 5 (2): 147-165.

Goss, J. 1993. "The Magic of the Mall: Form and Function in the Retail Environment." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 83: 18-47.

Goss, J. 1999. "Once-upon-a-Time in the Commodity World: An Unofficial Guide to Mall of America." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 89 (1): 45-75.

Gregory, D. 1994. *Geographical Imaginations*. Oxford. Blackwell

Gregory, D. 2004. *The Colonial Present*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Gregson, N., K. Brooks, and L. Crewe. 2000. "Narratives of Consumption and the body in the space of the charity shop," in *Commercial Cultures: economies, practices, spaces*, pp. 101-121. Edited by P. Jackson, M. Lowe, D. Miller, and F. Mort. Oxford and New York: Berg.

Gregson, N. and L. Crewe. 2003. *Second-hand cultures*. Oxford and New York: Berg.

Gupta, A. and J. Ferguson. 1992. "Beyond 'Culture:' Space, Identity and the Politics of Difference." *Cultural Anthropology* 7 (1): 6-23.

Guthman, J. 2003. "Fast food/organic food: reflexive tastes and the making of 'yuppie chow.'" *Social and Cultural Geography* 4 (1): 45-58.

Guthman, J. 2004. *Agrarian Dreams: The Paradox of Organic Farming in California*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Grosz, E. 1994. *Volatile Bodies. Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Hachey, M. 2007. *Tosha! Worker Organizing Against Sweatshop Development in Kenya, 2003-2006*. Unpublished B.A. Honors Thesis. UNC Chapel Hill.

Haggblade, S. 1990. "The Flip Side of Fashion: Used Clothing Exports to the Third World." *Journal of Development Studies* 26 (3): 505-521.

- Hale, A. and J. Wills. (Eds.) 2005 *Threads of Labour: Garment Industry Supply Chains from the Workers' Perspective*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hall, S. 1997. *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hall, T., and P. Hubbard. 1996. "The Entrepreneurial City: New Urban Politics, New Geographies?" *Progress in Human Geography* 20 (2): 153-174.
- Hanby, J. and D. Bygott. 1984. *Kangas, 101 Uses*. Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Printers Ltd.
- Hannerz, U. 1989. "Culture Between Center and Periphery: Toward a Macroanthropology." *Ethnos* 54: 200-216.
- Hannerz, U. 1992. *Cultural Complexity. Studies in the Social Organization of Meaning*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hannerz, U. 1996. *Transnational Connections*. London: Routledge.
- Hansen K. T. 1994. "Dealing with used clothing: salaula and the construction of identity in Zambia's Third Republic." *Public Culture* 6 (3): 503-523.
- Hansen K. T. 1995. "Transnational Biographies and Local Meanings: Used Clothing Practices in Lusaka." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21 (1): 131-145.
- Hansen K. T. 1999. "Second-hand clothing encounters in Zambia: Global discourses, western commodities, and local histories." *Africa* 69 (3): 343-365.
- Hansen K. T. 2000. *Salaula: The World of Secondhand Clothing and Zambia*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hansen K.T. 2004a. "The World in Dress: Anthropological Perspectives on Clothing, Fashion, and Culture." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33: 369-392.
- Hansen K. T. 2004b. "Helping or hindering? Controversies around the international second-hand clothing trade." *Anthropology Today* 20 (4): 3-9.
- Hansen, K.T. 2004c. "From Thrift to Fashion: Materiality and Aesthetics in Dress Practices in Zambia," in *Clothing as Material Culture*, pp. 107-120. Edited by S. Küchler and D. Miller. Oxford: Berg.
- Hart G. 2002. *Disabling Globalization. Places of Power in post-apartheid South Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hart, G. 2004. "Reworking Apartheid Legacies: Export Production, Gender, and Social Wages in South Africa, 1980-2000," in *Globalization, Export-Oriented Employment and Social Policy: Gendered Connections*. Edited by R. Pearson and S. Razavi. Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hartwick, E. 1998. Geographies of consumption: a commodity-chain approach. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 16: 423-37.
- Harvey, D. 1989a. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

- Harvey, D. 1989b. *The Urban Experience*. Baltimore. MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Hay, M. 2004. "Changes in Clothing and Struggles Over Identity in Colonial Western Kenya," in *Fashioning Africa: Power and the Politics of Dress*, pp. 67-83. Edited by Jean Allman. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Hazlewood, A. 1979. *The Economy of Kenya: The Kenyatta Era*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Henderson, J., P. Dicken, M. Hess, N. Coe, and H. Wai-Chung Yeung. 2002. "Global Production Networks and the Analysis of Economic Development." *Review of International Political Economy* 9 (3): 436-464.
- Hendrickson. 1995. *Weaving Identities: Construction of Dress and Self in a Highland Guatemala Town*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Hill, C. 1994. "Trade Policy and Promotion of Manufactured Exports," in *Asia and Africa: Legacies and Opportunities in Development*. Edited by D.L. Lindauer and M. Roemer. San Francisco: ICS Press.
- Hino, S. 1968. "The Costume Culture of the Swahili People. *Kyoto University African Studies* 2: 109-145.
- Hirst, P. and G. Thompson. 1999. *Globalization in Question, Second Edition*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Ho, E. 2006. *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility Across the Indian Ocean*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hopkins, T. and I. Wallerstein. 1986. "Commodity chains in the world economy prior to 1800." *Review* 10 (1): 157-170.
- Horst, C. 2004. Money and Mobility: Transnational Livelihood Strategies of the Somali Diaspora." *Global Migration Perspectives No. 9*. Geneva: Global Commission on International Migration.
- Horton, M. 1996. *Shanga. The archaeology of a Muslim trading community on the coast of East Africa*. The British Institute in Eastern Africa Memoir 14. London: The British Institute in Eastern Africa.
- Horton, M. and J. Middleton. 2000. *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hughes, A. 2000. "Retailers, knowledges and changing commodity networks: the case of the cut flower trade," *Geoforum* 31: 175-219.
- Humphrey, J. and H. Schmitz. 2001. "Governance in Global Value Chains." *IDS Bulletin*, 32 (2): 19-29.
- Hyndman, J. 1997. "Managing and Containing Displacement after the Cold War: UNHCR and Somali refugees in Kenya." *Refuge* 16 (5): 6-10.

Hyvärinen, A. 2001. "Implications of the Introduction of the Agreement of Textiles and Clothing (ATC) on the African Textiles and Clothing Sector." UNCTAD
<http://www.intracen.org/mds/sectors/textils/actafric.htm>

Ikiara, G. K., J. Olewe-Nyunya, and W. Odhiambo. 2004. "Kenya: Formulation and Implementation of Strategic Trade and Industrial Policies," in *The Politics of Trade and Industrial Policy in Africa. Forced Consensus?* Edited by C. Soludo, O. Ogbu, and H.-J. Chang. Africa World Press/IDRC.

Ikiara, G. K. and L. Ndirangu 2003. "Prospects of Kenya's Clothing Exports under AGOA after 2004." Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) Discussion Paper No. 24. <http://www.kippira.org/Download/DPNo24.pdf>

Jackson, P. 1993. "'Towards a cultural politics of consumption.'" In *Mapping the Futures: local cultures, global change*. Edited by J. Bird, B. Curtis, T. Putnam, G. Robertson. and I. Tickner. London: Routledge.

Jackson, P. 2002. "Commercial cultures: Transcending the cultural and the economic." *Progress in Human Geography* 26: 3-18.

Jackson, P. 2004. "Local consumption cultures in a globalizing world." *Transactions IBG* 29: 165-78.

Jacobs, J. 1996. *Edge of Empire. Postcolonialism and the City*. London: Routledge.

Jessop, B. 2002. "Liberalism, Neoliberalism and Urban Governance: A State-Theoretical Perspective." *Antipode* 34 (3): 452-472.

Jones, J. 1981. *Resources and Industry in Tanzania: Use, Misuse, and Abuse*. Dar es Salaam: Tanzanian Publishing House.

Kabukuru, W. 2006. "Kenya: Look East My Son," in *New African*. July 2006. No. 453: 24-25.

Kalra, V. S. 2004. The Political Economy of the Samosa. *South Asia Research* 24: 21-36.

Kamungi, P. and S. Ouma. 2004. *The Manufacture of Poverty: The Untold Story of EPZs in Kenya*. Nairobi: Kenya Human Rights Commission.

Kaplinsky, R. 1978. "Introduction: The role of the multinational corporation in the Kenyan economy" in *Readings on the Multinational Corporation in Kenya*. Edited by R. Kaplinsky. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kaplinsky, R. 1980. "Capitalist Accumulation in the Periphery – The Kenyan Case Re-examined." *Review of African Political Economy* 17: 97.

Katz, C. 2001. "On the Grounds of Globalization: A Topography of Feminist Political Engagement." *Signs* 26 (4): 1213-34.

Kimani, M. 2002. "The Textile Industry in Kenya." Nairobi: Ministry of Trade and Industry working paper.

http://www.intracen.org/worldtradenet/docs/whatsnew/atc_lesotho_november2002/country_paper_kenya.pdf

Kinyanjui, M. and D. McCormick. 2003. "Value Chains in Small Scale Garment Producers in Nairobi." Nairobi: Institute of Development Studies, University of Nairobi.

Kithaka, G. 2006. "Trendy Khanga." *Sunday Nation* [Kenya], June 11, 2006:11.

Kong, L. 2001. "Mapping 'new' geographies of religion: Politics and poetics in modernity." *Progress in Human Geography* 25 (2): 211-233.

Kristof, N. 2006. "In Praise of the Maligned Sweatshop" *New York Times*. June 2006.
<http://select.nytimes.com/search/restricted/article?res=F00D10FA3F550C758CDDAF0894DE404482#>

Krueger, R. A. 1994. *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publishing.

Langdon, S. 1981. *Multinational Corporations in the Political Economy of Kenya*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Latour, B. 1987. *Science in Action*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Latour, B. 1988. *Pasteurization of France*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Latour, B. 1993. *We Have Never Been Modern*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Lavie, S. and T. Swedenburg (Eds.). 1996. *Displacement, Diaspora, and Geographies of Identity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Lefebvre, H. [1974] 1991. *The production of space*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Leslie, D. 2002. "Gender, retail employment and the clothing commodity chain." *Gender, Place, and Culture* 9 (1): 61-76.

Leslie, D. and S. Reimer. 1999. "Spatializing commodity chains." *Progress in Human Geography* 23 (3): 401-420.

Lester, A. 2003. "Colonial and postcolonial geographies." *Journal of Historical Geography* 29 (2): 277-288.

Levin, S. 1974. "The Upper Bourgeoisie from the Muslim Commercial Community of Memons in Pakistan, 1947 to 1971." *Asian Survey* March 14 (3): 231-243.

Lewis, W. 1954. "Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labour" in *The Manchester School* 22 (2): 139-191.

Leys, C. 1975. *Underdevelopment in Kenya. The Political Economy of Neo-Colonialism, 1964-1971*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.

Leys, C. 1980. "What does 'Dependency' Explain?" *Review of African Political Economy* 17: 109-111.

Leys, C. 1994. "Confronting the African Tragedy." *New Left Review*. I/204, March-April 1994: 33-47.

Leys, C., J. Borges and H. Gold. 1980. "State Capital in Kenya: A Research Note." *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 14 (2): 307-317.

Linnebuhr, E. 1989. "The Role of Cloth for Social and Economic Change - an Evaluation of David Miller's Data from South-East Tanzania," in *Transition and Continuity of Identity in East Africa and Beyond - In Memoriam David Miller*, pp. 295-302. Edited by E. Linnebuhr. Bayreuth African Studies Series, Special Number). Bayreuth: BASS.

Linnebuhr, E. 1992. "Kanga: Popular Cloths with Messages" in *Sokomoko: Popular Culture in East Africa*, pp. 81-90. Edited by W. Graebner. Atlanta: Rodopi.

Linnebuhr, E. 2004. "Zawadi ni tunda la moyo" [A gift is a fruit from the heart] *Form+Zweck* <http://www.formundzweck.com/eng/themen.php?D+Kleidersprache>

Little, P. 2003. *Somalia: Economy without State*. Oxford: James Currey.

Lodziak, C. 2002 *The Myth of Consumerism*. London and Sterling, VA: Pluto Press.

Malaga, J. 2006. "CAFTA-DR: The Case of Cotton and Textiles." http://209.85.165.104/search?q=cache:owMOVT_GzS0J:cnas.tamu.edu/SAEA06Malaga.ppt+Malaga+2006+cafta+dr&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=us&client=safari

Manzo, K. 1999. "The 'New' Developmentalism: Political Liberalism and the Washington Consensus" in *The American Century: Consensus and Coercion in the Projection of American Power*. Edited by D. Slater and P. Taylor. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Marcus, G. 1995. "Ethnography in/of the World System: the Emergence of Multi-sited Ethnography." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24: 95-117.

Markusen, A. 1996. "Sticky places in slippery space: A typology of industrial districts." *Economic Geography* 72 (3) 293-313.

Marx, K. [1867] 1992. *Capital, volume 1*. New York: International Publishers.

Massey, D. 1991. "A global sense of place." *Marxism Today* 24-9.

Massey, D. 1994. *Space, Place and Gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Mauss, M. 1973. "Techniques of the Body." *Economy and Society* 2: 70-88.

Mawdsley, E. 2007. "China and Africa: Emerging Challenges to the Geographies of Power." *Geography Compass* 1 (3): 405-421.

Maxon, R. 1992. "Multinational Corporations," in *An Economic History of Kenya*. Edited by Ochieng and R. Maxon. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, Ltd

Mazrui, A. and A. Mazrui. 1995. *Swahili state and society: The political economy of an African language*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.

Mbitiru, C. 2006. "Questions over China's close ties with Africa." *Daily Nation* [Kenya]. 12 June 2006: 16.

McCormick, D. 1996. "Policies Affecting Kenyan Industrialization: 1964-94," in *From Sessional Paper No. 10 to Structural Adjustment: Towards Indigenizing the Policy Debate*. Edited by N. Ngethe and W. Owino. Nairobi: Institute for Policy Analysis and Research.

McCormick, D. 1998. "Enterprise clusters in Africa: On the way to industrialisation?" *Institute of Development Studies Discussion Paper No. 366*. University of Sussex.
<http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/bookshop/dp/dp366.pdf>

McCormick, D., P. Kimuyu, and M. Kinyanjui. 2001. "Kenya's Garment Industry: An Institutional View of Medium and Large Firms" *IDS Working Paper No. 531*. Nairobi: University of Nairobi, Institute for Development Studies.

McCormick, D., P. Kimuyu and M. Kinyanjui. 2002. "Weaving through reforms: Nairobi's small garment producers in a liberalised economy." Paper presented at the East African Workshop on Business Systems in Africa, Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi, and the Centre for Development Research, Copenhagen
http://bij.hosting.kun.nl/iaup/esap/publications/nairobi/Nairobi_garment_paper_%204.pdf

McCormick, D. 2006. Personal communication.

McEwan, C. 2003. "Material geographies and postcolonialism." *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 24 (3): 340-355.

McGaffey, J. and R. Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000. *Congo-Paris: Transnational Traders on the Margins of the Law*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

McKinley, J. 1996. "Clothes You Gave Away Are a Hot Item in Africa." *New York Times*. 14 March 1996.
<http://select.nytimes.com/search/restricted/article?res=FA0912FE3D5D0C778DDDA0894DE494D81>

McRobbie, A. (Ed.) 1988. *Zoot Suits and Secondhand Dresses. An Anthology of Fashion and Music*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.

McRobbie, A. 1997. "Bridging the Gap: Feminism, Fashion and Consumption." *Feminist Review* (55): 73-89.

Merleau-Ponty, M. 1962. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by C. Smith. New York: Humanities Press.

Merleau-Ponty, M. 1964. *Sense and Non-Sense*. Translated by H. Dreyfus and P. Allen Dreyfus, Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Middleton, J. 1992. *The World of the Swahili. An African Mercantile Civilization*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Middleton, J. 2004. *African Merchants of the Indian Ocean. Swahili of the East African Coast*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Mireri, C. 2000. "The Impact of Export Processing Zone Development on Employment Creation in Kenya." *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 21(2): 149-165

Mirza, S. and M. Strobel (Eds.). 1989. *Three Swahili Women: Life Histories from Mombasa, Kenya*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Mitchell, D. 1996. *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Mitchell, K. 1997a. "Different Diasporas and the Hype of Hybridity." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 15(5): 533-553.

Mitchell, K. 1997b. "Transnational Discourse: Bringing Geography Back In." *Antipode* 29 (2): 101-114.

Mitchell, K. 2001. "Transnationalism, Neo-Liberalism, and the Rise of the Shadow State." *Economy and Society* 30 (2): 165-189.

Mitchell, K. 2003. "Cultural geographies of transnationality," in *Handbook of Cultural Geography*. Edited by K. Anderson, M. Domosh, S. Pile, and N. Thrift, pp.74-87. London: Sage.

Mkandawire, T. and C. Soludo. (Eds.). 1999. *African Voices on Structural Adjustment. A companion to Our Continent, Our Future*. Ottawa: IDRC.

Mochama, T. 2006. "Men Only" [column]. *Sunday Standard* [Kenya]. 9 April 2006: 15.

Montell, F. 1999. "Focus group interviews: A new feminist method." *NWSA Journal* 11 (1): 44-71.

Morris, M. 1998. *Too Soon Too Late: History in Popular Culture*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Morris, M. 2006. "Globalization, China, and Clothing Industrialization Strategies in Sub-Saharan Africa," in *The Future of the Textile and Clothing Industry in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Edited by H. Jauch and R. Traub-Merz. Germany: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

Mshomba, R. 2000. *Africa in the Global Economy*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

Mulama, J. 2005. "International Labour Day - Kenya: A Murky Future for Textile Workers." 1 May 2005. *Inter Press Service News Agency*, <http://www.ipsnews.net/interna.asp?idnews=28520>

Murdoch, J. 1997. "The Spaces of Actor-network Theory" *Geoforum* 29 (4): 357-74.

Mustafa, H. N. 1998. "Sartorial Ecumenes: African Styles in a Social and Economic Context." *The Art of African Fashion*, pp. 13-45. Den Haag: The Netherlands: Prince Claus Fund.

Mutunga, K. 2006. "The Estate that never sleeps." *The Nation* [Kenya]. 26 May 2006: 8.

Mutunga, K. 2006. "Trends: Where is my Brazil jersey?" *The Nation* [Kenya]. 2 June 2006: 8.

- Mwangi, M. 2005. "The End is now nigh for the used clothes and shoe trade." *The East African Standard*, 15 March 2005.
http://www.eastandard.net/archives/cl/hm_news/news.php?articleid=15439&date=15/03/2005
- Mwathane, I. 2006. "Chinese are coming, but is Kenya ready?" *The East African*. May 15-21, 2006: 15.
- Myers, 1995. "A Stupendous Hammer: Colonial and Post-Colonial Reconstructions of Zanzibar's Other Side." *Urban Studies* 32 (8): 1436-1449.
- Myint, H. 1954. "An Interpretation of Economic Backwardness" in *Oxford Economic Papers* 6 (6): 132-163.
- Nagar, R., V. Lawson, L. McDowell, and S. Hanson. 2002. "Locating Globalization: Feminist (Re)readings of the Subjects and Spaces of Globalization." *Economic Geography* 78 (3): 257-95.
- The Nation* [Kenya] 2004. "Kenya: Let Locals Reap AGOA Gains." 14 April 2004.
- The Nation* [Kenya] 2007. "Spinning to Resume at Rivatex." 25 July 2007.
<http://allafrica.com/stories/200707241214.html>
- Nef, J. and W. Robles. 2000. "Globalization, Neoliberalism, and the State of Underdevelopment in the New Periphery." *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology* 16 (1): 27-48.
- Ng'etich, P. and B. Kwalia. 2007. "Violence to be Key Issue in Volatile Area." *The Nation* [Kenya]. 7 July 2007. <http://allafrica.com/stories/200707060906.html>
- Norris, L. 2004. "Cloth That Lies: The Secrets of Recycling in India," in *Clothing as Material Culture*, pp. 83-106. Edited by S. Küchler and D. Miller. Oxford: Berg.
- Nyang'oro, J. 2004. Personal communication.
- Nyanzi, S. 1962. "A Review of the East African Common Market." *Transition* No. 6/7 October 1962: 13-14.
- Ochieng, W. R. and R. Maxon 1992. *An Economic History of Kenya*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, Ltd
- Ogonda, R. T. 1992. "Post-independence trends in developments of transport and communications," in *An economic history of Kenya*, pp.313-326. Edited by W. R. Ochieng and R. M. Maxon. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.
- Okutoyi, F. 2006. "'Mamluki' ndani" ['Mercenaries' inside] *Taifa Leo*. 10 June 2006: 1-3.
- Olson, E. A. 1985. Muslim identity and secularisms in contemporary Turkey: 'The headscarf dispute.'" *Anthropological Quarterly* 58: 161-170.
- Olsen, E. and Silvey, R. 2006. "Guest Editorial. Transnational Geographies: rescaling development, migration, and religion." *Environment and Planning A* 38: 805-808.
- Oluoch, J. 2006. "Sunrise in the East," in *Business in Africa*, pp. 16-22.

- Omolo, J. 2006. "The Textiles and Clothing Industry in Kenya," in *The Future of the Textile and Clothing Industry in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Edited by H. Jauch and R. Traub-Merz. Bonn: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.
- Ong, A. 1999. *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Ong, A. and D. Nonini (Eds.). 1997. *Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism*. New York: Routledge.
- Ongile, G. and D. McCormick. 1996. "Barriers to Small Firm Growth: Evidence from Nairobi's Garment Industry," in *Small Enterprises: Flexibility and Networking in an African Context*, pp. 40-62. Edited by D. McCormick and P. O. Pedersen. Nairobi: Longhorn.
- Otieno, J. 2005. "Move Over Uncle Sam, the Chinese Are Now in Town" *The Nation* [Kenya]. 23 August 2005.
- Oyuke, J. 2007. "Kenya: Rivatex to Open Soon says Trade Minister." *East African Standard*. 25 July 2007. <http://allafrica.com/stories/200707241173.html>
- Packer, G. 2002. "How Susie Bayer's T-Shirt Ended Up on Yusuf Mama's Back." *The New York Times*. 31 March 2002.
- Palmer, A. and H. Clark. (Eds.). 2004. *Old Clothes, New Looks: Second Hand Fashion*. Oxford: Berg.
- Paolini, A. 1997. "The Place of Africa in Discourses about the Postcolonial, the Global, and the Modern." *New Formations* 31: 83-106.
- Peck, J. 2004 "Geography and public policy: constructions of neoliberalism." *Progress in Human Geography* 28 (3): 392-405.
- Peck, J. and A. Tickell. 2002. "Neoliberalizing space." *Antipode* 34: 380-404.
- Peet, R. 1997. "The Cultural Production of Economic Forms." In *Geographies of Economies*, R. Lee and J. Wills, eds., pp. 37-46. London: Arnold.
- Peet, R. and E. Hartwick. 1999. *Theories of Development*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Pickles, J. 2002. "Gulag Europe? Mass Unemployment, New Firm Creation, and Tight Labor Markets in the Bulgarian Apparel Industry," in *Work, Unemployment and Economies*. Edited by A. Smith, A. Swain, and A. Rainnie. London: Routledge.
- Pickles, J. 2006. "Trade liberalization, industrial upgrading, and regionalization in the global clothing industry." *Environment and Planning A* 38: 2201-2206.
- Pickles, J. and Smith, A. eds. 1998. *Theorising Transition: The Political Economy of Post-Communist Transformations*, London: Routledge.
- Pickles, J. and J. Woods. 1989. "Taiwanese Investment in South Africa." *African Affairs* 88: 507-528.

- Pido, D. 2002. Personal communication.
- Pinkney, R. 2001. *The International Politics of East Africa*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Porter, M. A. 1992. *Swahili Identity in Post-Colonial Kenya: The Reproduction of Gender in Educational Discourses*. Unpublished dissertation. University of Washington.
- Porter, P. and E. Sheppard. 1998. *A World of Difference: Society, Nature, Development*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Portes, A. 1997. "Immigration Theory for a New Century: some problems and opportunities." *International Migration Review* 31: 799-825.
- Pratt, G. and B. Yeoh. 2003. "Transnational (counter) topographies." *Gender, Place and Culture* 10: 159-166.
- Prebisch, R. [1981] 1994. "The Latin American Periphery in the Global System of Capitalism" *CEPAL Review* 13: 143-150, reprinted in R. Kanth, ed., *Paradigms in Economic Development. Classic Perspectives, Critiques, and Reflections*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Prestholdt, J. 1998. "As Artistry Permits and Custom May Ordain: The Social Fabric of Material Consumption in the Swahili World, circa 1450 to 1600. PAS Working Papers Number 3. Program of African Studies, Northwestern University. <http://www.northwestern.edu/african-studies/working%20papers/wp3prestholdt.pdf>
- Prestholdt, J. 2004. "On the Global Repercussions of East African Consumerism," *The American Historical Review* 109 (3) <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/109.3/prestholdt.html>
- Prins, A.H.J. 1967. *The Swahili-Speaking Peoples of Zanzibar and the East African Coast*. London: International African Institute.
- Rabine, L. 2002. *The Global Circulation of African Fashion*. New York: Berg.
- Radcliffe, S. 1999. "Re-thinking Development," in *Introducing Human Geographies*, pp. 84-91. Edited by P. Cloke, P. Crang and M. Goodwin. London: Arnold.
- Rahnema, M. and V. Bawtree, eds. 1997. *The Post-Development Reader*. Halifax: Fernwood.
- Raikes, P., M. Friis Jensen, and S. Ponte. 2000. "Global commodity chain analysis and the French filière approach: comparison and critique." *Economy and Society* 29 (3): 390-417.
- Rammohan, K.T. and R. Sundaresan. 2003. "Socially Embedding the Commodity Chain: An Exercise in Relation to Coir Yarn Spinning in Southern India." *World Development* 31 (5): 903-923.
- RATES. 2003. *Cotton-Textile and Apparel Value Chain Report for Kenya*. Nairobi: Regional Agricultural Trade Expansion Support Program (RATES).
- Republic of Kenya. Various. *Statistical Abstract* [annual report]. Nairobi: Government Printers.

- Republic of Kenya. Various. *Economic Survey* [annual report]. Nairobi: Government Printers.
- Republic of Kenya. 1975. *Sessional Paper On Economic Prospects and Policies*. Nairobi: Government Printers.
- Republic of Kenya. 1988. *Directory of Industries 1986*. Central Bureau of Statistics. Nairobi: Government Printers.
- Republic of Kenya. 2001. "Position paper on the textile industry."
http://www.tradeandindustry.go.ke/documents/di_report_textile.pdf
- Rivoli, P. 2005. *The Travels of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Robinson, J. 2003. "Postcolonialising Geography: Tactics and Pitfalls" in *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 24 (3): 273-289.
- Roemer, M. 1993. "Industrial Strategies: Outward Bound," in *Asia and Africa: Legacies and Opportunities in Development*. D. L. Lindauer and M. Roemer. San Francisco: ICS Press.
- Rose, G. 2001. *Visual Methodologies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rostow, W. 1960. *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rweyemamu, J. 1992. *Third World Options. Power, Security and the Hope for Another Development*. Dar es Salaam: Tanzanian Publishing House.
- Sachs, J. 1996. "Emerging Markets and Foreign Aid," in *Emerging Markets and International Development: Options for U.S. Foreign Policy*, National Planning Association Report, No. 282.
- Sachs, J. 2005. *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time*. New York: Penguin.
- Sachs, J. and A. Warner. 1997. "Sources of Slow Growth in African Economies." *Journal of African Economies*. December 1997 6 (3): 335-376.
- Sachs, W., ed. 1992. *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power*. London: Zed Books.
- Said, E. 1979. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Said, E. 1993. *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Verso.
- Sassen, S. 1999. *Globalization and its Discontents. Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money*. New York: New Press.
- Sayer, A. 1997. "The dialectic of culture and economy," in *Geographies of Economies*, pp. 16-26. Edited by R. Lee and J. Wills. London: Arnold.
- Secor, A. 2002. "The Veil and Urban Space in Istanbul: Women's Dress, Mobility and Islamic Knowledge." *Gender, Place and Culture* 9 (1): 5-22.

- Secor, A. 2005. "Islamism, Democracy, and the Political Production of the Headscarf Issue in Turkey," in *Geographies of Muslim Women. Gender, Religion, and Space*, pp. 203-225. Edited by G-W. Falah and C. Nagel. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Schoenberger, E. 1997. *The Cultural Crisis of the Firm*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Schrank, A. 2004. "Ready-to-Wear Development: Foreign Investment, Technology Transfer, and Learning-by-Watching in the Apparel Trade." *Social Forces* 83 (1): 123-156.
- Sheppard, E. 2002. "The spaces and times of globalisation: place, scale, networks, and positionality." *Economic Geography* 78 (3): 307-330.
- Sheriff, A. 1987. *Slaves, Spices, and Ivory in Zanzibar: Economic Integration of East Africa into the World Economy*. London: James Currey.
- Sidaway, J. 2000. "Postcolonial geographies: An exploratory essay." *Progress in Human Geography* 24 (4): 591-612.
- Sidaway, J. 2007. "Spaces of postdevelopment." *Progress in Human Geography* 31 (3): 345-361.
- Silvey, R. 2005. "Transnational Islam. Indonesian Migrant Domestic Workers in Saudi Arabia," in *Geographies of Muslim Women. Gender, Religion, and Space*, pp. 127-146. Edited by G-W. Falah and C. Nagel. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Smith, A., A. Rainnie, M. Dunford, J. Hardy, R. Hudson, and D. Sadler. 2002. "Networks of value, commodities and regions: reworking divisions of labour in macro-regional economies." *Progress in Human Geography* 26 (1): 41-63.
- Smith, A., J. Pickles, and R. Begg. 2003. "Cutting it: European integration, trade regimes and the reconfiguration of East-Central European apparel production." *Environment and Planning A* 35 (12): 2191-2207.
- Smith, A. 2004. "Regions, Spaces of Economic Practice and Diverse Economies in the 'New Europe'" in *European and Regional Studies* 11 (1): 9-25.
- Smith, B. 2007 (forthcoming). *Dubai, Landscape, and the Production of Attractive Markets*. Unpublished dissertation. University of Kentucky.
- Smith, M. P. 2001. *Transnational Urbanism: Locating Globalization*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Sorbara, M. 2006. "China calling: Is it time to say goodbye to US and Europe?" *Daily Nation* [Kenya]. 14 April 2006: 12-13.
- Spivak, G. 1985. "Three women's texts and a critique of imperialism." *Critical Inquiry* 12: 243-261.
- Standard [Kenya]. 2006a. "So what exactly do the city public health officers do?" 10 January 2006.
http://www.eastandard.net/archives/cl/hm_news/news.php?articleid=34753&date=10/1/2006
- Standard [Kenya]. 2006b. "Spoilt for Choice." *Financial Standard*. 2 May 2006: 2.

- Steiner, C. "Another Image of Africa: Toward an Ethnohistory of European Cloth Marketed in West Africa, 1873-1960." *Ethnohistory* 32 (2): 91-110.
- Stiglitz, J. 2003. *Globalization and its Discontents*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Storper, M. 1997. "Territories, flows and hierarchies in the global economy" in *Spaces of Globalization: reasserting the power of the local*. K. Cox (ed.), New York: Guilford.
- Strobel, M. 1979. *Muslim Women in Mombasa, 1890-1975*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Sturgeon, T. 2001. "How Do We Define Value Chains and Production Networks?" *IDS Bulletin* 32 (3): 9-18.
- Swainson, N. 1978a. "State and Economy in Post-Colonial Kenya, 1963-1978." *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 12 (2): 363.
- Swainson, N. 1978b. "Company Formation in Kenya before 1945 with particular reference to the role of foreign capital" in *Readings on the Multinational Corporation in Kenya*. Edited by R. Kaplinsky. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Swainson, N. 1980. *The Development of Corporate Capitalism in Kenya 1918-77*. London: Heinemann.
- Swartz, M. 1991. *The Way the World Is. Cultural Processes and Social Relations among the Mombasa Swahili*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Swyngedouw, E. 1997. "Neither global nor local: 'Glocalization' and the politics of scale." In *Spaces of Globalization: Reasserting the power of the local*. K. Cox (ed.). New York: Guilford.
- Sylvanus, N. 2007a. Personal communication.
- Sylvanus, N. 2007b. "The Fabric of Africanity: Tracing the Global Threads of Authenticity." *Anthropological Theory* 7: 201-216.
- Tarlo, E. 1996. *Clothing Matters: dress and identity in India*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Taylor, M.J. and N. Thrift. 1982. *Multinationals and the Restructuring of the World Economy*. London: Croon Helm.
- Taylor, P., M. Watts, and R. Johnston. 2002. "Geography/Globalization." *Geographies of Global Change*, pp. 1-18. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Thoya, F. 2002. "Moi Ordered to Hand Over Report on Ethnic Violence." *The Nation* [Kenya]. 16 October 2002.
- Thrift, N. J. and K. Olds. 1996. "Refiguring the Economic in Economic Geography." *Progress in Human Geography* 20: 31-37.
- Thrift, N. 2000. "Pandora's Box: cultural geographies of economies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Economic Geography*, pp. 689-704. Edited by G. L. Clark, M. P. Feldman, M. S. Gertler. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Turner, T. [1980] 1993. "The social skin," in *Not Work Alone: a cross-cultural view of activities superfluous to survival*. Edited by J. Cherfas and R. Lewin. London: Temple Smith.

United Nations. 1996. *1995 International Trade Statistics Yearbook*. Vol. 2: *Trade by commodity*. New York: United Nations.

United Nations. 2003. *2001 International Trade Statistics Yearbook*. Vol. 2: *Trade by country*. New York: United Nations.

United Nations. 2005. *TNCs and the Removal of Textiles and Clothing Quotas*. New York and Geneva: United Nations UNCTAD.

US ITC. 2004. *Textiles and Apparel: Assessment of the Competitiveness of Certain Foreign Suppliers to the US Market*. Washington, DC: ITC.

United States. 2005. *Doing Business In Kenya: A Country Commercial Guide for U.S. Companies*. Chapter 4: Leading Sectors for U.S. Export and Investment.
[http://commercecan.ic.gc.ca/scdt/bizmap/interface2.nsf/vDownload/CCG_4723/\\$file/X_1849445.DOC](http://commercecan.ic.gc.ca/scdt/bizmap/interface2.nsf/vDownload/CCG_4723/$file/X_1849445.DOC).

Urry, J. 2000. *Sociology Beyond Societies*. London: Routledge.

Valentine, G. 2002. "Incorporations: food, bodies and organisations." *Body & Society* 8: 1-20.

Vasagar, J. 2004. "Kenyans say no to national dress" 25 October 2004.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/kenya/story/0,,1335096,00.html>

Wahome, C. 2006. "African Renaissance Prints." *Saturday Standard* [Kenya], 6 March 2006: 12-13.

Wainaina, B. 2007. "Generation Kenya." *Vanity Fair*. No. 563. July 2007: 84-94.

Walker, I. 2002. "From Moroni to Mukalla: Hadhramis in Ngazidja (Comoros Islands) and in the Hadhramhout." *Journal des Africanistes* 72 (2):111-122.

Walker, I. 2007 (forthcoming). "The Western Indian Ocean," in *The City and Urban Life*. Edited by J. Rogozinski. New York: M. E. Sharpe.

Wallerstein, I. 1974. *The Modern World-System*. New York: Academic Press.

Wallerstein, I. 1994. "Development: Lodestar or Illusion?," in *Capitalism and Development*. Edited by L. Sklair. London: Routledge.

Wallerstein, I. 2000. "Introduction to Special Issue on Commodity Chains in the World Economy, 1590 to 1790." *Review* 23(1): 1-13.

Wambugu, 2002. *Trade Liberalisation and Entrepreneurship: Responses to Constraints and Opportunities by Micro and Small Garment Producers in Nairobi*. Unpublished M.A. thesis. University of Nairobi.
http://209.85.165.104/search?q=cache:f42RH0fTJa8J:www.fiuc.org/esap/NAIRO/NAIRO9/General/Trade_liberalisation.pdf+wambugu+mccormick+kenya&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=4&gl=us&client

[=safari](#)

- Warde, A. 2002. "Setting the Scene: changing conceptions of consumption," in *The Changing Consumer: markets and meanings*, pp. 10-24. Edited by S. Miles. A. Anderson, and K. Meetham. London and New York: Routledge.
- Warigi, G. 1997. "Was There a Political Link to the Violence in Mombasa?" *The East African Standard*. 25 August 1997.
- Watts, M. 1999. "Commodities," in *Introducing Human Geographies*, pp. 305-315. Edited by P. Cloke, P. Crang, and M. Goodwin. London: Arnold.
- Watts, M. 2003. "Development and Governmentality." *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 24 (1): 6-34.
- Weismann, R. 1996. "Waiting to Export: Africa Embraces Export Processing Zones." *Multinational Monitor*, July-August: 12-17.
- White, J. 1999. "Islamic Chic," in *Istanbul Between the Global and the Local*. Edited by C. Keyder, pp. 77-91. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Wicks, R. and A. Bigsten. 1996. "Used Clothes as Development Aid: The Political Economy of Rags." Working Papers in Economics 17. Göteborg University. Department of Economics.
- Wilkinson, S. 1998. "Focus groups in feminist research: power, interaction, and the co-construction of meaning." *Women Studies International Forum* 24 (1): 111-125.
- Xinhua. 2006. "Africa eyes China's emerging tourist market" 27 October 2006. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2006-10/27/content_5258005.htm
- Yeung H. W. C. 2002. "The limits to globalization theory: a geographic perspective on Global Economic Change." *Economic Geography* 78 (3): 285-305.
- Yeung, H.W.C. 2003. "Practicing new economic geographies: a methodological examination." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 93: 442-462.
- Yükseker, H. D. 2004. "Trust and Gender in a Transnational Marketplace: The Public Culture of Laleli, Istanbul." *Public Culture* 16 (1): 47-65.
- Zaman, M. Q. 2005. "The Scope and Limits of Islamic Cosmopolitanism and the Discursive Language of the 'Ulama,'" in *Muslim Networks. From Hajj to Hip Hop*, pp. 84-104. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

Interviews/Focus Groups (quoted in text)*:

March 2006

Opiyo 4 March
Chesang 11 March
(William) 14 March
(Bedi) 19 March
Farouq 22 March
Nguku 30 March

April 2006

(Ahmed) 3 April
(Saidi) 4 April
Focus Group 6 April (Cynthia, Suad, Leila)
(Mary) 8 April
(Fatuma) 11 April
(Catherine) 17 April
Bandu 26 April

May 2006

(Sheikh) 2 May
(Amina) 14 May
Focus Group 16 May (Salma, Husna,
Zeinab, Fatma)
(Ashura) 20 May

Moiz 28 May
Kaderdina 29 May

June 2006

(Jamal) 1 June
(Omari) 3 June
(Said) 6 June
Kaderdina 7 June
(Kazungu) 10 June
(Ali) 15 June
(Omar) 15 June
(Khadija) 17 June
(Yusuf) 19 June

July 2006

(Khadija) 5 July
(Yakub) 14 July
(Catherine) 16 July

August 2006

(Muhammad) 3 August
(Aziz) 5 August

* names in parentheses are pseudonyms

Kenya National Archive Codes:

1/5/64 – Survey of the Textile Industry in East Africa, 1964
2/2/4-7 – Import Control/Import Licenses on Cotton Textiles, 1951-1952
2/2/9 – Imports from India of Cotton Textiles, 1952
2/2/11 – Silk and rayon imports, 1951-1952
2/2/13 – Imports of handloom cotton piece goods from India, khaki drill, 1951-1952
AE/1/33 – Administration Policy – Textiles, 1953-1961
AE/3/736 – Imports control clothing and textiles, 1947-1954
AE/3/738 – n.d.*
AE/16/40 – Import and export, external trade commodities policy & general textiles, 1961
AE/19/151 – n.d.
AE/19/159 – Traders Licensing Ordinance, Hawkers, 1956
AE/22/225 – Secondary Industries, 1954-68
AE/22/228 – Secondary Industries, Cotton Textiles, 1964-1966
AE/22/238 – Industries, Secondary Industries Cotton Textiles, 1964-1966
AE/22/265 – Industries, Sunflag Textiles and Knitwear Mills, Ltd., 1955-1967
AE/22/584 – Textile products protection on East Africa basis, 1968
AG/1/587 – Clothing of natives, 1920-1945
C/I&E/2/14/32 – n.d.
CS/1/5/37 – Cotton Piece Goods, 1941-1942
C/TEX/8/197 – n.d.
DC/KIS/1/12/1 – n.d.
DC/KIS/1/14/1 – Clothing of Natives in Townships, 1914
I.33/403/53 – n.d.
IR.42/III – Tailors and Textiles Workers Union, 1956-1962
PC/CP/ 6/4/2 – Native Affairs General Policy - Clothing of Natives, 1920-1923
RX/1/13 – Import and Exports of Textiles, 1976-1978
SIN.4/238 – n.d.
TR/8/1059 – Kenya Clothing Co-op Society Ltd., 1965-1968
XZ/1/54 – Kenya Toray Mills Ltd. Textiles, 1970-1971
XZ/3/35 – Rift Valley Textiles Ltd. Board of Directors Meetings, 1975-1978 (no access)
XZ/5/97 – Textile Manufacturers 1968-1974
XZ/9/4 – Clothing & Made-up Textiles Study, Garment Industry (n.d.)

* n.d. = no description (general textiles/clothing)